



Petersburg National Battlefield

Educator's Guide
2005 - 2006





**United States Department of the Interior
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE**

**PETERSBURG NATIONAL BATTLEFIELD
1539 HICKORY HILL ROAD
PETERSBURG, VIRGINIA 23803-4721**



Dear Educator:

The mission of Petersburg National Battlefield is to preserve and protect the historical, cultural, and natural resources within the park in a manner that will provide interpretation, education, and enjoyment for the visitors. Education plays a vital role in the accomplishment of this mission. We hope that you will join us in our outdoor classroom to learn why and how we care for this National Battlefield.

The battlefield is pleased to offer a variety of educational programs designed to teach students of all ages about the significance of the American Civil War through the perspectives of the soldiers, civilians, slaves, plantation owners, and medical personnel. These programs have been developed to enhance your classroom instruction and to fulfill the *Virginia Standards of Learning* objectives for the appropriate grade levels. Educational materials can also be found on our web site at www.nps.gov/pete.

Visiting the battlefield will give you a glimpse of the nine and a half month struggle that took place here during the final stages of the Civil War, from June 15, 1864 to April 2, 1865. The five major railroads and the two major plank roads radiating from Petersburg made it critical to supplying Lee's Army of Northern Virginia, hence it was a strategic target for the Union Army. In relation to these events, education programs are designed to enhance the military and human aspects of the campaign at Petersburg National Battlefield.

This guide is designed to help you plan a field trip to the battlefield. It contains reservation and fee information, guidelines for your visit, program summaries, and background information on the siege of Petersburg. Please call our education specialist at **(804) 732-6094, ext. 204** or send an email to robin_snyder@nps.gov for any questions about these programs or to schedule a visit. The staff of Petersburg National Battlefield hopes that you will join us on a field trip to explore the real thing.

Sincerely,

Bob Kirby
Superintendent

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HISTORY OF THE PARK

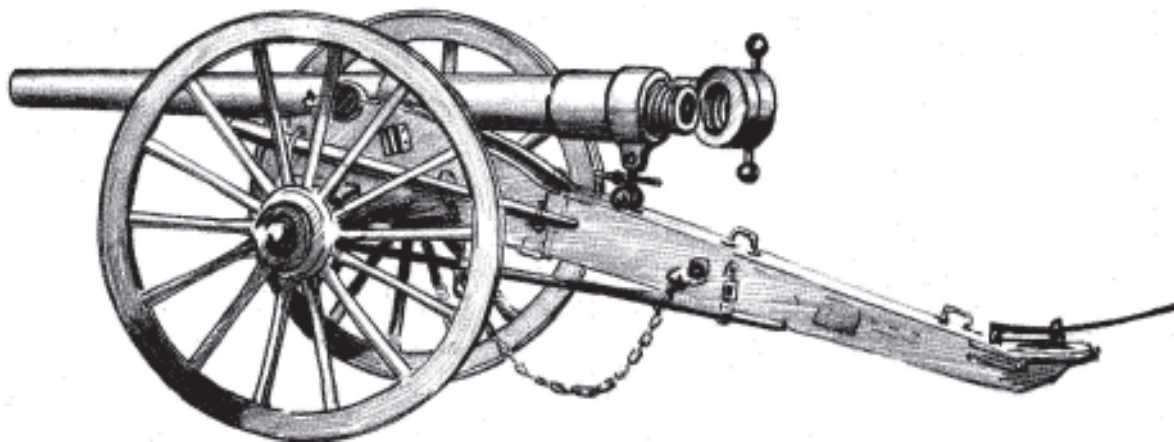
Petersburg National Battlefield welcomes nearly 500,000 visitors annually. Museum exhibits, self-guided walking and driving trails, along with ranger-guided tours and educational programs assist visitors in developing a greater understanding of Petersburg National Battlefield. This Battlefield commemorates the last major campaign of the American Civil War, which led to General Robert E. Lee's withdrawal from Petersburg and subsequent surrender of the Army of Northern Virginia at Appomattox Court House on April 9, 1865.

Petersburg National Battlefield contains 2,659 acres and is made up of ten separate units, with the main unit located between the City of Petersburg and Prince George County. The other units preserve the extensive fortifications and battlefields. Since the Act of July 3, 1926 which established Petersburg Military Park, several actions by Congress and presidents have taken place to add, transfer, and exclude lands and to change the park's name.

Congressional Acts establishing Petersburg National Battlefield units include the following:

Eastern Front	July 3, 1926
Five Forks	August 24, 1962
Grant's Headquarters	November 10, 1978
Poplar Grove	December 16, 1935
<i>(transferred by the Office of the Quartermaster General, U.S. Army)</i>	

In commemorating the campaign, siege, and defense of Petersburg, important elements of the story are both military operations and the effect these operations had on the daily lives of citizens and soldiers. It is important to maintain an appropriate balance between the military and the human aspects of the campaign. This goal is accomplished through the preservation and interpretation of the earthworks and other defenses used by the armies, as well as the homesteads and farms of the people who lived here.



PARK UNITS

EASTERN FRONT

Life on the Eastern Front of Petersburg is characterized by the nearness of the enemy trench lines. Historic earthworks and battle sites are located along the four-mile driving tour of this unit where the Initial Assault, Crater, and Fort Stedman Battlefields are located.

Museum and Map Program

The Visitor Center museum provides a view of artillery, artifacts, and personal war accounts of the siege of Petersburg. Nine and a half months of history are presented before you during this 15 minute map presentation on the siege of Petersburg. Both the museum displays and the map program provide an orientation of the military events for your tour of the battlefield.

Battery Five

Located at Tour Stop #1, this 1/2 mile-walking trail follows the original Confederate defense line. This site is the location of General Grant's initial attack at Petersburg by the Union Army on June 15, 1864. An authentic model of the "Dictator," a 17,000 pound 13-inch seacoast mortar is located along this trail.

Fort Stedman

Located at Tour Stop #5, a loop trail leads from Fort Stedman to Colquitt's Salient where the Confederate attack of March 25, 1865 originated. The trail also passes the 1st Maine Heavy Artillery Monument, which commemorates the highest regimental loss in a single action (June 18, 1864) of the Civil War.

The Crater

Located at Tour Stop #8, this short walking trail provides visitors an opportunity to view the entrance to the tunnel, the path of the tunnel, and the Crater itself. Wayside exhibits provide detailed descriptions of the Battle of the Crater.

GRANT'S HEADQUARTERS

City Point was the location of General Grant's Headquarters and the Union supply depot during the siege. Grant's cabin, the plantation house (Appomattox Manor) and the kitchen house, where slaves worked, offer a look into the story of life in this area before, during, and after the war.

WESTERN FRONT

The Union army targeted the Confederate supply lines, after they were unsuccessful in taking Petersburg by direct attack. Located in nearby Dinwiddie County, the Union target of battles throughout the Western Front were the Weldon and South Side Railroads.

FIVE FORKS

Located in Dinwiddie County, Five Forks was one of the most important intersections along the Petersburg front on April 1st, 1865. Here, the Union soldiers finally broke through the Confederate line and gained access to the South Side Railroad. The Confederate loss at Five Forks allowed the Union forces to take Petersburg and Richmond and ultimately led to the surrender at Appomattox eight days later on April 9th, 1865.

POPLAR GROVE NATIONAL CEMETERY

Many of the dead on both sides were reinterred in various cemeteries after the war. Most of the Confederate dead were buried in Petersburg's Blandford Cemetery, while 6,187 Union soldiers were buried in Poplar Grove National Cemetery.



PROGRAM GUIDELINES

Petersburg National Battlefield offers education programs to area schools. On the following pages, you will find descriptions and locations for the curriculum-based programs, a reservation sheet, and fee waiver information. Most educational institutions are admitted free of charge to the park when participating in education programs, provided they file a written request for a fee waiver. Listed below are basic guidelines for bringing a group on a field trip to the park.

Group Size: Large groups of students limit access to our resources and therefore diminish the effectiveness of our programs. As a result, we limit each group to a maximum of 60 students per program. If your group is larger, we will divide your group accordingly if our staffing permits.

Chaperones: One adult chaperone must accompany each group of 10 students (Grades K-6). While the educational program is the responsibility of the ranger, chaperones will be expected to maintain discipline. Chaperones must also maintain appropriate student behavior while the group explores the park on its own.

Be On Time: Our staff is limited and requests for programs are many. If your group is late, program times will be shortened accordingly. Please contact us if your group is going to be delayed for arrival.

Dress: Most programs are presented outdoors and involve walking. Students must be prepared for the weather and walking to battlefield forts and sites. Please prepare your students for the environment.

Lunch: There is a designated picnic area located between Tour Stops 3 and 4 on the self-guided driving tour of the Eastern Front unit. The first come, first served picnic area will accommodate about 100 students with tables, while others may wish to bring blankets. Groups may also picnic in other park areas provided they are at least 300 feet away from historic structures or features. Following your lunch, we ask that you deposit your trash in the trash receptacles provided in the picnic area. Please do not overload the cans. Garbage bags are available at the Visitor Center.

Check In: Upon arriving at the park, the group leader should check in at the Entrance Station or Visitor Center and find out where the program will begin.





THE SIEGE OF PETERSBURG

When the Union and Confederate armies met at Petersburg, Virginia in June 1864, many soldiers hoped that this long struggle would soon be resolved. For three years, old college classmates, military comrades, and even brothers battled each other to settle the conflict. However the trenches both armies were digging around Petersburg in June 1864, destroyed any hope of a quick resolve to the conflict. As the siege unfolded, the wheat fields and family farms around the city were soon replaced with walls of dirt, fallen trees, and the memories of those killed in this barren landscape. One soldier wrote about his experience fighting in the trenches of Petersburg:

Dear Wife Maggie,

"... Well this is the 22nd day of our operations before Petersburg. It's 3 days in the trenches and two out, with us, and the out is not much better than the in for we do not move so far to the rear but that the rebs can shell us. I am just as thin as a rail (just the condition for this country) yet in good health and strong as ever I was... I occupy a hole in the ground just long enough for one to lie down in and high enough to sit up in, covered with poles and two or three feet of earth to form a protection from pieces of shell. I cannot see that we are gaining much advantage but I suppose Mr. Grant knows what he is about."

- - J.J. Scroggs Diary and Letters (1852 - 1865)

Unfortunately, the lifestyle of this particular soldier varied little over the next nine months. The bitter trench warfare witnessed by soldiers at Petersburg personified the horrific reality of war. Gallant marches, war heroes, and great victories were unknowns at Petersburg, where thousands of soldiers would make their final resting place before the war's end. Soldiers instead experienced the stress and boredom of living daily behind walls of dirt, punctuated by moments of pure horror. At Petersburg, the lifestyle of both the Union and Confederate soldiers reflected the strong commitments they had for continuing to fight.

At Petersburg National Battlefield, the story of this nearly ten-month struggle is told from the perspectives of a plantation family and their slaves, the soldiers and laborers at General Ulysses S. Grant's headquarters and supply base, the infantry men in the miles of siege line trenches, and the civilians caught up in this horrible landscape.



A Slave, A Plantation, A War

Background

On the eve of the Civil War, Dr. Richard Eppes looked with pride over the lands of his Appomattox plantation that his ancestors had called home for the last one hundred years. Working those lands were his slaves, whose efforts kept a roof over his family, provided food for his table and maintained his upper-class lifestyle. Though it seems simple at first glance, the relationship between the plantation house and the slave quarters was tense, complex and fragile.

In his journals, Eppes revealed his belief that slavery was a part of the natural order, and that he viewed his relationship with his slaves as a fatherly one. In keeping with the attitude of many slaveholders, he saw the institution of slavery as the natural hierarchy that made the South comparable to the ancient civilizations of Greece and Rome. These slave-based societies allowed free men to create great civilizations - with the South being the last in this line.

The complexity of Eppes' relationship with his slaves stemmed mainly from his fatherly attitude toward them. While he allowed slaves to wed in his house, had his children baptized along with slave children, and avoided breaking up slave families, he also saw them only as human beings merely capable of knowing right from wrong. This meant, among other things, that Eppes decided who could marry, whipped them for transgressions, and controlled their movements on and off the plantation. While there are few slave accounts from this plantation, through Eppes' journal one can discern that work slowdowns, feigning illness, playing up stereotypes, and misplacing/losing property were tactics used by the slaves to express their feelings about, and to exert some control over their situation. Though Eppes never notes a slave escape in his journal, a former slave of his said slaves around the area escaped all of the time with the help of captains on the ocean ships docked nearby.

However Eppes viewed his relationship with his slaves, its tension and fragility were exposed with the intervention of the Union army in May 1862. As the Union army attempted to take Richmond, Federal gunboats plied the James River along which Appomattox Plantation stood. In response to this the Eppes family and their slaves made decisions about their own lives that forever altered life on this plantation. Eppes' wife and children moved to Petersburg and by the end of the summer all but five slaves had left with the Union army. Though the war would not come to the manor in earnest for another two years, its touch had redefined a century-old relationship.



"God grant that this war may not be of long duration or direful in its effects but to preserve our liberty we must be prepared to endure trials & afflictions and one of the greatest is our separation from our numerous friends and relatives in Philadelphia."

--Dr. Richard Eppes, April 15, 1861, plantation owner at Hopewell, Virginia

Focus Grade Levels: 4th - 6th / 75 minutes
(Program is suitable for K - 12th)

Program Description

The structures of City Point represent three distinct groups of people. The kitchen building is where house slaves worked and slept. Appomattox Manor was the home of the Eppes' family who owned this large plantation. Grant's cabin represents the Union occupation of this area during the siege of Petersburg.

A tour of these structures provides insight into the experience and lifestyles of a slave, a plantation owner, and a military general. Students will explore the experiences of these individuals through props, primary source documents, poetry and song to understand how the Civil War connected and forever altered their lives.

Program Location: Grant's Headquarters at City Point in Hopewell

Standards of Learning Objectives

VS.1, VS.7a, USI.9

Book List

For Teachers

Vlach, John M., *In Back of the Big House*, Chapel Hill, NC, 1993.

Trudeau, Noah A., *The Siege of Petersburg Civil War Series*, Eastern National, 1995.

Perdue, Charles; Barden, Thomas, and Phillips, Robert, *Weevils in the Wheat, Interviews with Virginia Ex-Slaves*, Charlottesville, VA, The University Press of Virginia, 1997.

Grant, Ulysses, *Personal Memoirs of U.S. Grant Vol. II*, New York, NY, Charles L. Webster & Company, 1886.

For Students

Reeder, Carolyn, *Across the Lines*, New York, NY, Avon Books, Inc., 1997.

Kalman, Bobbie, *Life on a Plantation*, New York, NY, Crabtree Publishing Company, 1997.



Cannoneers to Your Post

Background

Artillery of the Civil War had come a long way since the days of the American Revolution and the Napoleonic Wars. By the 1860s, artillery in the Civil War was more dependable, more accurate, and caused greater destruction than in previous conflicts. Though some of the artillery had ranges of up to several miles, a Civil War gunner knew that his piece was most effective at less than five hundred yards. Reasons for this included having to see the target, faulty fuses, and battlefield conditions.

It is ironic that Civil War artillery, which was employed to keep the enemy at bay at a distance, was most effective at close range. Civil War artillery was more effective as a defensive weapon than as an offensive one. On no other battlefield is this irony more poignantly demonstrated than here at Petersburg.

The experience here on the Eastern Front of this siege was one of constant bombardment at close quarters. Unlike other Civil War engagements where large barrages were significant events, the exchange of shells along the front were merely part of the daily routine -- a routine repeated two hundred and ninety-two days.

For those soldiers living at point-blank range, survival meant living underground in bombproofs, dealing with the stress of bombardments, and learning which shell was coming their way. As the defensive walls got thicker and the trenches deeper, mortars became the dominant type of artillery at the siege because they were able to send shells in a high arch over and into the enemy's works. The following entry is not an unusual description of life amid the shells:

"Friday, 2d. The [artillery] batteries have a combat about every day. To-Day ours attempted to compel a party of rebels to cease working on a certain fort. A Confederate battery tried to silence ours. The mortars on each side joined in. Some of our bombproofs have fared hard, but no one was injured. Battery 20 reopened with her mortars early in the evening, and tossed a shell over to our adversary every fifteen minutes during the night. Sometimes two or three would be sent over together."

At 7:00 PM on June 15th, 1864 the Union soldiers launched an artillery bombardment on Petersburg, beginning the nearly ten month siege. After capturing a mile of the Confederate trench lines, including ten artillery batteries, Union soldiers were unable to exploit their success and take the city. As the roar of the cannons resounded along the trench lines and in the city, little did soldiers from both armies know that this sound signaled days, weeks, and months of fighting.



"How little we know what a day may bring forth. Yesterday was so quiet one could hear a pin drop. Today there is enough noise for 500 boiler factories, an incessant firing of mortars."

- - John Haley, Maine Volunteers

Focus Grade Levels: 4th - 6th / 60 minutes
(Program is suitable for 3rd - 8th)

Program Description

This program examines the opening assaults on the city of Petersburg from the Union and Confederate perspectives and the role that artillery played in the assault on Petersburg. Students learn how fortifications and artillery made it difficult for infantry soldiers to charge the men in the trenches, resulting in the prolonged fighting along the siege lines. They explore how artillery assisted the soldiers in the trenches and learn how to fire a cannon by a role-playing drill of the cannons' positions.

Program Location: Fort Morton / Stop #7 along the Park Tour Road

Standards of Learning Objectives

VS.7, USI.1, USI.9

Book List

For Teachers

Trudeau, Noah A., *The Siege of Petersburg Civil War Series*, Eastern National, 1995.
 Trudeau, Noah A., *The Last Citadel: Petersburg, Virginia June 1864 - April 1865*, Baton Rouge, LA, Louisiana State University Press, 1991.
 Horn, John, *The Petersburg Campaign*, Conshohocken, PA, Combined Publishing, 1993.
 Griffith, Paddy, *Battle in the Civil War: Generalship & Tactics in America*, Field Books, 1986.
 Coggins, Jack, *Arms & Equipment of the Civil War*, Wilmington, NC, Bradfoot Publishing Company, 1990.

For Students

Herbert, Janis, *The Civil War for Kids*, Chicago Review Press, Inc., 1996.
 Flato, Charles, *Golden Book of the Civil War*, New York, NY, Golden Books Publishing Company, Inc., 1961.



City Under Siege

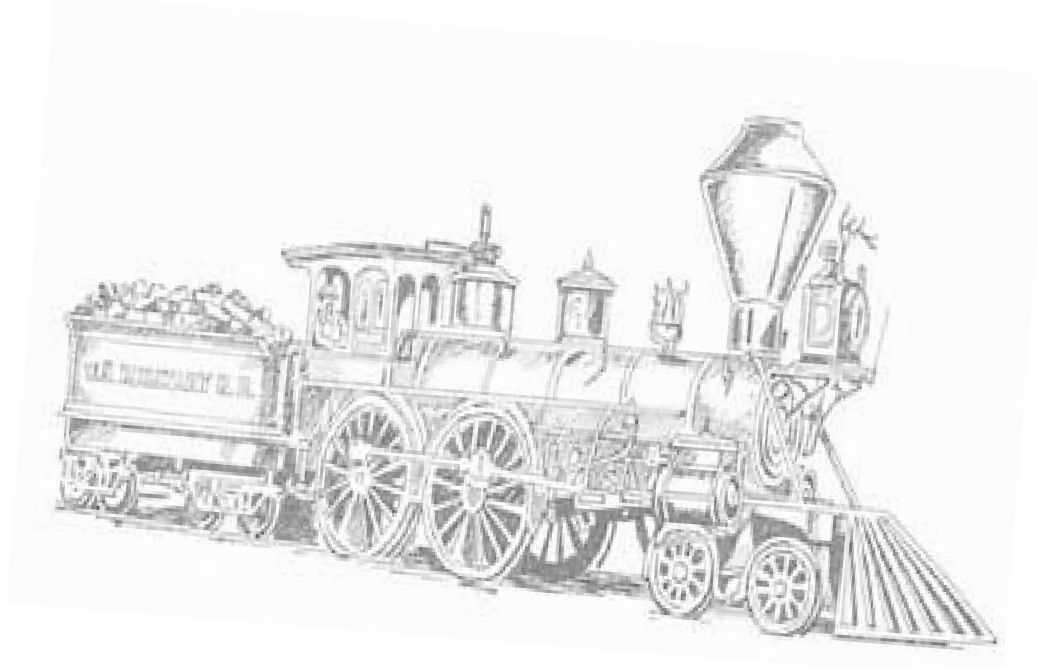
Background

As it had been before the Civil War, Petersburg, Virginia was an important transportation center and a critical link between Richmond, (the Confederate capital) and the rest of the South. Through the city of Petersburg came most of the supplies that Richmond needed in order to function.

When the smoke had settled from the Union's failed attempt to take Richmond in 1862, Confederate authorities realized the vulnerability of this supply center. In response, a ten mile-long wall, fortified with numerous gun batteries, was constructed around the city by slave and freed black labor. For the next two years Petersburg was relatively quiet and untouched by the war, with the wall becoming more a place for children to play rather than for soldiers to defend.

In May 1864, Union forces arrived east of Richmond to sever the rail connection into the Confederate capital city. This campaign included several actions against Petersburg but it was not until June 15 that the Union forces arrived at the city's wall with its capture in mind. The battle that night had come after six weeks of heavy fighting between the armies of General Ulysses S. Grant (USA) and General Robert E. Lee (CSA) that had started near Fredericksburg, Virginia and ended just outside of Richmond. After the Battle of Cold Harbor, Grant, realizing that he could not get Richmond by direct assault, had turned to Petersburg knowing that if it fell, Lee would have to abandon Richmond.

Union forces led by General William "Baldy" Smith (USA) did breach the wall on June 15th, but failed to exploit their success. This decision would ultimately lead to the nearly ten month-long siege that turned the landscape around Petersburg into one of trenches and dirt and added another 70,000 men to the casualty lists of the war.



"The siege goes bravely on. The two armies keep digging away under each other's guns. The hardships to be endured are very great, but all now have schooled themselves down so that they are met as a matter of course. We do not pretend to say how long we will have rest, nor do we care much, for we are so used to hardships that almost everything is done without a murmur."

- - D.G. Crotty, Third Michigan Volunteer

Focus Grade Levels: 4th - 6th / 60 minutes
(Program is suitable for 3rd - 12th)

Program Description

This program provides students an orientation to the battlefield through an interactive map activity and a tour of Battery #5, where the initial assault on Petersburg occurred. Using a canvas map which illustrates the trench lines around the city, students will practice their map skills by identifying the battle objectives of the Union army.

Following the map activity, students take a tour of Battery Five where they identify features of the earthworks. Using props and soldiers' letters, students learn how the landscape of trenches at Petersburg affected the length and outcome of the siege.

Program Location: Battery Five located at Eastern Front Visitor Center

Standards of Learning Objectives

History / Social Science: VS.7, VUS.6, USI.9

Book List

For Teachers:

Trudeau, Noah A., *The Siege of Petersburg Civil War Series*, Eastern National, 1995.
 Henderson, William, *Petersburg in the Civil War*, Lynchburg, VA, H.E. Howard Inc., 1998.
 Horn, John, *The Petersburg Campaign*, Conshohocken, PA, Combined Publishing, 1993.

For Students:

Reeder, Carolyn, *Across the Lines*, New York, NY, Avon Books, Inc. 1997.
 Herbert, Janis, *The Civil War for Kids*, Chicago, Chicago Review Press Inc. 1996.



Call to Duty

Background

During the beginning and near the end of the Petersburg siege, the fields around Hare Hill were the scene of two important battles. Though separated by more than nine months of fighting, these battles are linked by similar acts of desperation and courage. The events which took place on these fields demonstrate the carnage and costs of these desperate actions. Explore these fields where soldiers fought during the opening assaults on Petersburg on June 18, 1864; and where Confederate troops launched their last major offensive of the war on March 25, 1865.

War has its costs, and no where is this more poignantly displayed than in the stretch of lines that became known as Union Fort Stedman. From the opening assaults on the city, to the final battles of the relentless siege, the landscape played a significant role in the battles. Forced to leave their home and abandon their farms and corn-field, the Hare family left this location when trenches were dug through their yard. Little did they know that this place they called home would become such a bloody battlefield, not once, but twice during the fighting around Petersburg.

A soldier's motivation and his willingness to sacrifice his life in battle sometimes goes beyond a simple call of duty. Acceptance among the ranks and desperation in a losing cause against heavy odds can draw a soldier into fierce conflict. Such was the case in each of these battles.



"The "Johnnies" charged upon our brigade about three oclock this A.M. took one of our forts -- which they were not able to hold. Things looked very blue for a while, but at last we drove them out of the fort with our Artillery and gallant Infantry, thank God, the Victory is ours, and the "Johns" paid very dear for their Attempt."

--George Barton - 57th Massachusetts Infantry

Focus Grade Levels: 4th - 6th, 11th / 60 minutes
(Program is suitable for 4th - 12th)

Program Description

Students discover how the landscape affected two battles fought at Petersburg on the same field at the beginning and the end of the siege. Students role-play the soldier's experience on June 18th by participating in roll call, walking the path of the Union soldiers who fought in this battle, and identifying the ultimate costs of this fighting. Students then walk the path of Confederate soldiers who made their last desperate offensive in March 1865. Students compare the desperate actions of both Union and the Confederate soldiers by walking in their footsteps and hearing the voices of those who survived.

Program Location: Fort Stedman / Stop #5 along Park Tour Road

Standards of Learning Objectives

VS.1, VS.7, USI.9d

Book List

For Teachers:

Bearss, Edward, *Heaviest Regimental Loss of the War - Background to Event Depicted*.
 Davis, William C, *Death In The Trenches - Grant at Petersburg*, Alexandria, VA, Time-Life Books Inc., 1986.
 Hodgkins, William, *Battle of Fort Stedman*.
 Shaw, Horace, *The First Maine Heavy Artillery 1862-1865*, Portland, Maine, 1903.

For Students:

Reeder, Carolyn, *Across the Lines*, New York, NY, Avon Books, Inc. 1997.
 Herbert, Janis, *The Civil War for Kids*, Chicago, Chicago Review Press Inc. 1996.

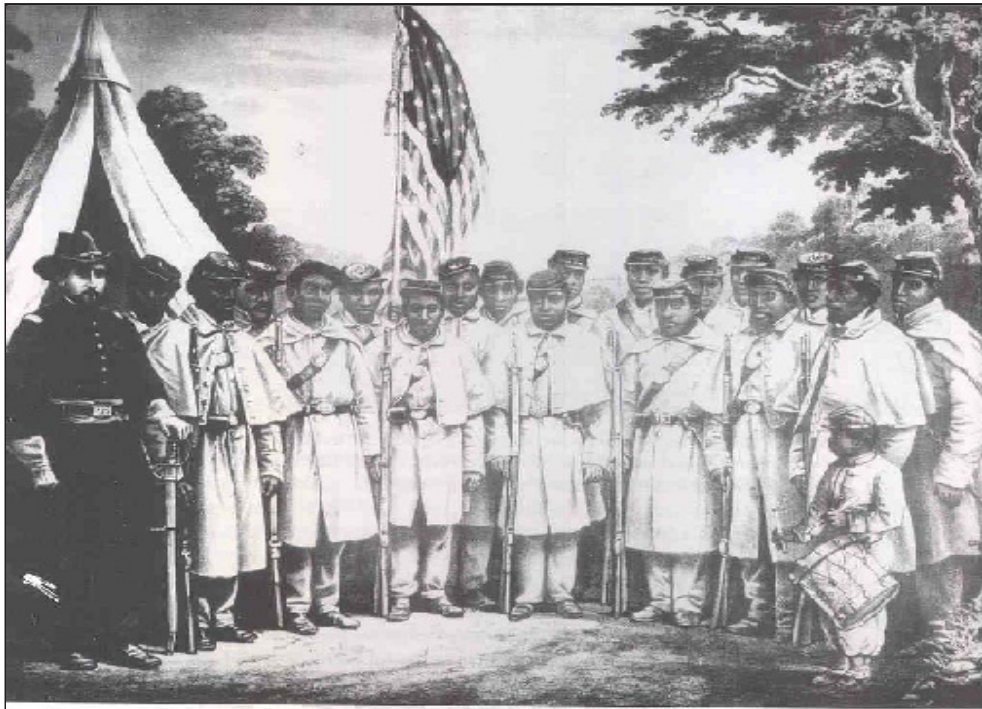


Portrait of a Soldier

Background

As the winter of 1864 settled in, a regiment received their shipment of great coats. The men of this unit had sent them off for storage during the spring and summer campaign. Packed away when the unit was nearly a thousand strong, the coats were now reminders of the nearly seven hundred men lost in those five months between the Wilderness and the trenches of Petersburg. This was the price being paid by both armies and the cost had a fundamental impact. The commitment of these soldiers to finishing the war now equaled their commitment to their causes and in this, the strength of their beliefs was revealed. On the fields of Petersburg nowhere was this more poignantly shown than at the Battle of the Crater.

What was to be a surprise pre-dawn mine explosion underneath Confederate lines followed by a quick hitting Union attack to break through and seize Petersburg, degenerated into an emotional ten hour long struggle which climaxed at the end with savage hand-to-hand combat. Among the stories on that hot afternoon are the actions of the United States Colored Troops and the dedication displayed by those Union soldiers who braved enemy fire to bring water and ammunition to those trapped in the Crater. To have asked Sergeant Decatur Dorsey of the 39th USCT, Private John Haley of the 17th Maine, and Private William Pilcher of the Richmond Artillery Otey Battery, what the cost was that day they might have pointed out the five thousand casualties that changed nothing. Ask them why they fought that day and words like "freedom," "equality," "democracy," and "home" may have been spoken. Knowing that all three fought until the war's end, you would not have to ask about the depth of their commitment.



COME AND JOIN US BROTHERS.



"The suspense was fearful and some were already predicting the failure of the great mine when the smothered roar of an earthquake and a power which shook the earth for miles around the mighty giant broke throughout the imprisoning walls lifting the rebel fort, guns and garrison high in the air."

- - Lieutenant J.J. Scroggs, 5th USCT (United States Colored Troops)

Focus Grade Levels: 4th - 6th / 90 minutes
(Program is suitable for 3rd - 12th)

Program Description

This program examines the soldiers' motivations to fight. Union soldiers fought to save the Union from being torn apart. Confederate soldiers fought for states' rights and the protection of a slave economy. United States Colored Troops (USCTs) fought for their freedom. The individual struggles of these soldiers are evident in the story of the Battle of the Crater. Students accompany a park ranger on a tour of the Crater and explore props, colors, and letters representing soldiers. Students will discuss the meaning of these items and how they portray the soldiers' commitment to their cause.

Program Location: Crater Site / Stop #8 along Park Tour Road

Standards of Learning Objectives

VS.7b, USI.9b, VUS.1a

BOOK LIST

For Teachers:

Kinard, Jeff, *The Battle of the Crater*, Abilene, TX, McWhiney Foundation Press, 1998.
 Gladstone, William, *Men of Color*, Gettysburg, PA, Thomas Publications, 1993.
 Silliker, Ruth, *The Rebel Yell & The Yankee Hurrah*, Camden, Maine, Down East Books, 1985.
 Carmichael, Peter, *Lee's Young Artillerist*, Charlottesville, VA, The University of Virginia Press, 1995.

For Students:

Mettger, Zak, *Till Victory is Won, Black Soldiers in the Civil War*, New York, NY, Penguin Books, 1997.
 Price, William, *Civil War Handbook*, Springfield, VA, L.B. Prince Co., Inc., 1961.



Beans, Bullets, and Blankets

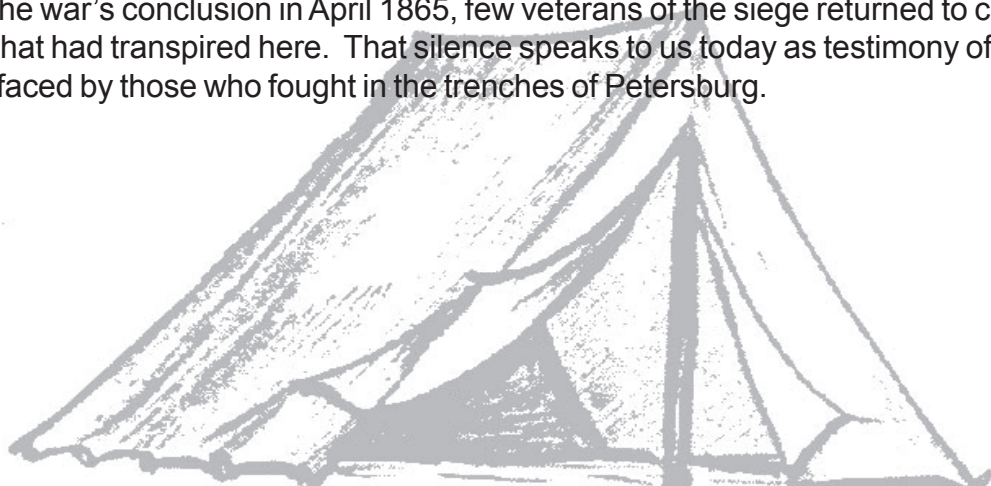
Background

The landscape and the length of the siege of Petersburg made it a uniquely horrible experience for the soldiers who fought here. For the first three years of the war most engagements were of one to three days duration and therefore the terrain of these battles remained largely intact. However, the siege transformed treeless rural fields into hundreds of miles of fortifications in which soldiers found themselves trapped by trench warfare.

The Union and Confederate armies found themselves in this situation as General Robert E. Lee (CSA) committed to defending a thirty-seven mile front from Richmond, the Confederate capital, to just beyond Petersburg, its supply center. Opposing him was General Ulysses S. Grant (USA) who, after the disaster at the Battle of the Crater, would not assault Petersburg again and instead committed his troops to severing all supply routes into the city. By doing this Grant knew he could drive Lee out of both Petersburg and Richmond. It would take eight separate Union offensives during nine-and-a-half months for Grant to achieve this objective.

In terms of soldier life in the trenches around Petersburg this meant a great deal of misery and stress punctuated by moments of pure horror. In a regimental history it is noted “the trenches were rife with garbage that attracted rats and insects, and nearby latrines drew swarms of flies that in turn infected food supplies. Men under fire had no choice but to urinate or defecate where they were standing. . . The sum of all these odors, from the rotting flesh of death to the stench of human waste, from the odious decomposing garbage, to the sulfurous tang of black powder, during the summer months when the heat of the sun made the stink increase.” This misery was combined with the constant stress of living within point-blank range of the enemy. A soldier expresses this while relating life along the front, “. . . [their] sharpshooters had a clear range of our entire front, and we were quick on the trigger; my regiment suffered a daily loss. Captain Stevens, while sitting behind a tree and reading a newspaper inadvertently exposed his head and was shot through the neck. He bled to death in the arms of Sergeant-Major Stevens, his brother.”

After the war’s conclusion in April 1865, few veterans of the siege returned to commemorate what had transpired here. That silence speaks to us today as testimony of the hardships faced by those who fought in the trenches of Petersburg.



"The heat was at times terrific, but the men became greatly accustomed to it, and endured it with wonderful ease. Their heavy woolen clothes were a great annoyance; tough linen or cotton clothes would have been a great relief; indeed there are many objections to woolen clothing for soldiers, even in winter."

- - Edward Stevens McCarthy, Army of Northern Virginia

Focus Grade Levels: 4th - 6th / 90 minutes
(Program is suitable for K - 12th)

Program Description

Soldiers of both the Union and Confederate armies were "Prisoners of Petersburg" for the nine-and-half month long siege. Soldiers spent their days in the trenches where they fought, slept, ate, and passed the time. This program provides a hands-on approach to army life as it takes students through a day in the life of a soldier. Students dress in soldier uniforms, participate in marching drills, walk through trenches, unpack haversacks, and examine soldier shelters. During each activity students read quotes by soldiers about their daily tasks in camp and in the trenches.

Program Location: Siege Encampment / Stop #3 along Park Tour Road

Standards of Learning Objectives

VS.1, VS.7, USI.9

Book List

For Teachers:

Trudeau, Noah A., *The Siege of Petersburg Civil War Series*, Eastern National, 1995.
 Billings, John, *Hardtack and Coffee*, Gansevoort, NY, Corner House Historical Publications, 1996.
 Griffith, Paddy, *Battle in the Civil War: Generalship & Tactics in America*, Field Books, 1986.
 Robertson Jr., James, *The Civil War's Common Soldier Civil War Series*, Eastern National, 1994.

For Students:

Reeder, Carolyn, *Across the Lines*, New York, NY, Avon Books, Inc. 1997.
 Herbert, Janis, *The Civil War for Kids*, Chicago, Chicago Review Press Inc. 1996.



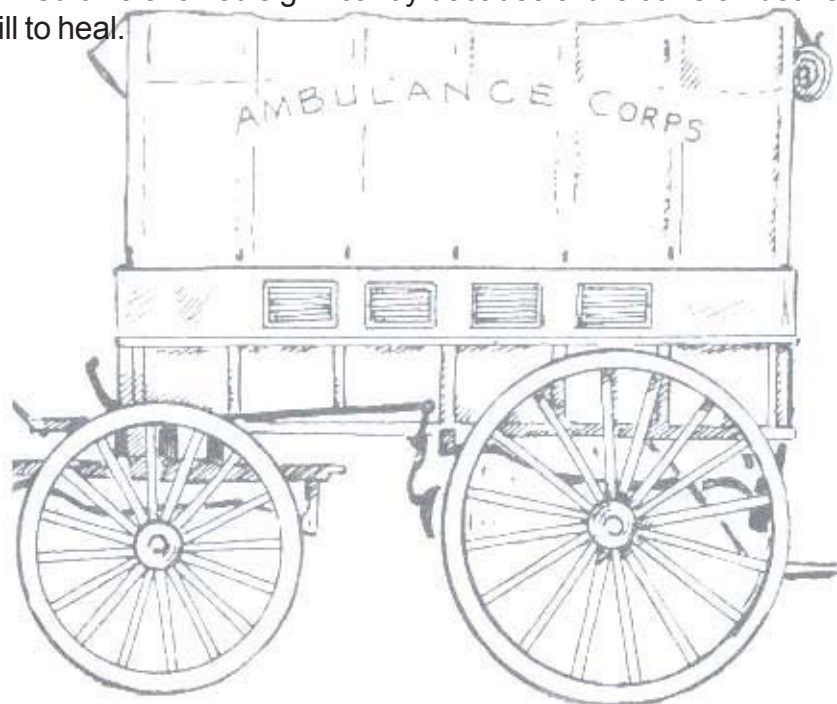
Woe to the Wounded

Background

After the first battle in 1861, Civil War soldiers quickly realized this was not their forefather's war. One of the twin-tragedies to befall these men was the advances in the technology of war colliding with the near stagnant science of battlefield medicine. The simple change alone from musket ball to rifled bullet meant larger wounds and shattered limbs from greater distances and at a higher rate of fire. This resulted in the field surgeons performing endless amputations.

As daunting as this was, doctors were also facing the larger problems of sanitation, sterilization, and organization. During the course of the war, sanitary policies were often ignored, creating camps that were breeding grounds for fatal cases of dysentery, measles, malaria, etc. Though the importance of sanitation was understood by doctors, the concept of germs was nearly unknown. This meant that a surgeon's hands and instruments went unwashed between operations which spread gangrene from patient to patient as they were being treated. To add to this, not until the second year of the war, did an effective system of removing the wounded from the battlefield and an effective field hospital plan exist for either side.

Fortunately for the front line soldier, the pressure of war brought advances to the medical world. For example, though there were two deaths from sickness for every death from battle wounds in the Civil War, it was a far cry from the ten to one ratio in the Mexican War. By the time of the siege of Petersburg, medical organization and sanitation had reached its peak at Chimborazo in Richmond, Virginia, (the war's largest permanent hospital complex) and the Union's Field Depot Hospital at City Point, (the war's largest field hospital complex). Wounded soldiers could now get treatment at front line stations, be quickly transported to rear field hospitals, and then to permanent hospitals, by rail or ships, if needed. By the end of the war, battlefield medicine evolved significantly because of the collision between the will to kill and the will to heal.



*"A sight in camp in the daybreak gray and dim,
As from my tent I emerge so early sleepless,
As slow I walk in the cool fresh air the path near by the hospital tent,
Three forms I see on stretchers lying, brought out there untended lying,
Over each the blanket spread, ample brownish, woolen blanket,
Gray and heavy blanket, folding, covering all."*

--Walt Whitman

Focus Grade Levels: 4th - 6th / 60 minutes
(Program is suitable for 3rd - 8th)

Program Description

In this program students learn firsthand the limitations faced by these medical personnel and the decisions they had to make in caring for their patients during the American Civil War. Class members will role-play both wounded soldiers fresh from the front and field hospital staff waiting behind the lines. Medical staff will examine and prioritize the injuries of the wounded while balancing the needs of the soldiers against the available medical supplies. The result is an interactive examination of the care soldiers could expect, and what doctors were doing to save the wounded from the carnage produced by the Civil War.

Program Location: Battery 5 located at Eastern Front Visitor Center or Grant's Headquarters at City Point

Standards of Learning Objectives

VS.1, VS.7, USI.9

Book List

For Teachers:

Beller, Susan, *Medical Practices in the Civil War*, Charlotte, VT, Susan Provost Beller, 1992.

Dammann, Dr. Gordon, *Medical Instruments and Equipment (Vol. I, II, III)*, Missoula, MT, Pictorial Histories Publishing, 1983.

Jaquette, Henrietta S., *Letters of a Civil War Nurse*, Lincoln, NB, University of Nebraska Press, 1998.

Adams, George W., *Doctors in Blue*, Baton Rouge, LA, Louisiana State University, 1980.

For Students:

Beller, Susan, *Medical Practices in the Civil War*, Charlotte, VT, Susan Provost Beller, 1992.

Herbert, Janis, *The Civil War for Kids*, Chicago, IL, Chicago Review Press Inc., 1996.



Siege Line Tour

"From information received last night it is pretty certain that Grant's whole force has crossed to the south side of the James River . . . I have ordered all the troops over towards Petersburg leaving the outer defenses at Richmond in charge of Gen. G.W.C. Lee . . ."

-Robert E. Lee, June 18th, 1864 in correspondence to Confederate President Jefferson Davis

Background

During the spring of 1864, Grant had not succeeded in his objective to defeat the Confederate armies in the field, particularly Robert E. Lee's Army of Northern, Virginia. From the Wilderness to an area outside of Richmond known as Cold Harbor, victory eluded Grant. During the battle of Cold Harbor, Grant's army suffered crushing losses while trying to take Richmond by direct attack. After the failure at Cold Harbor, Grant had his men pack up and move south of the James River; the railroads leading into Petersburg became the new target. Petersburg would be his back door to Richmond. Little did he realize that the city of Petersburg would become the setting for a 292 day siege, as Confederate soldiers dug in to protect their vital supply lines and Union soldiers dug in as they tried to capture the same.

Focus Grade Level: 9th – 12th / Time: 6 – 7 hours

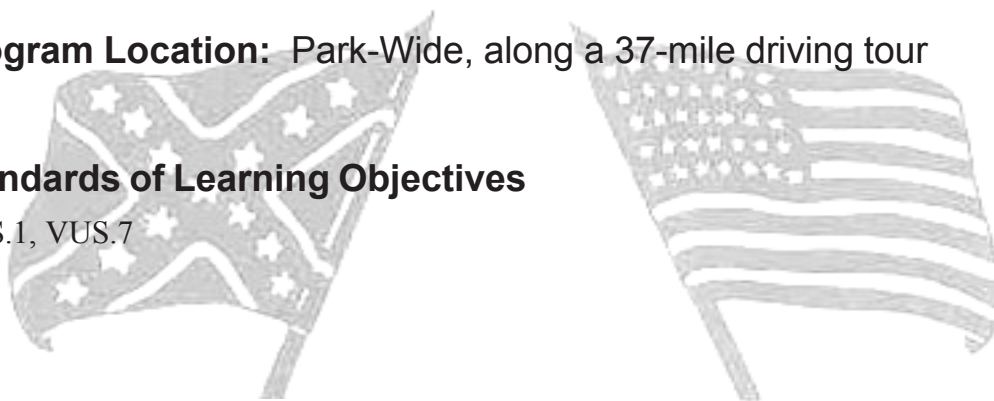
Program Description

Explore the siege lines from the Union army's arrival at City Point in June 1864 to the battle of Five Forks on April 1, 1865. A ranger will join you on your tour or school bus to travel along the miles of trenches constructed by the soldiers in and around Petersburg, as the Union army pushed to capture the Confederate supply routes. Explore the site of the Union logistics operation and Grant's Headquarters at City Point. On the Eastern Front, discover the opening battle sites including the 1st Maine Heavy Artillery's charge, Lee's last offensive of the war at Fort Stedman, and the battle of the Crater. Head west to investigate the battles for the Weldon and South Side Railroads and to tour Poplar Grove National Cemetery. Conclude your tour at the Five Forks Battlefield, one of the most important crossroads in the nation at the close of the American Civil War.

Program Location: Park-Wide, along a 37-mile driving tour

Standards of Learning Objectives

VUS.1, VUS.7



Civilians and Soldiers

"It is not easy to write about the dreadful war between the North and the South. We press our breasts against a thorn when we recall the anguish of those days of death and disaster. It is often said that it is still too early to write the story of our Civil War. It will soon be too late. Some of us still live who saw those days. We should not shrink from recording what we know to be true. Thus only will a full history of American courage and fidelity be preserved, — for all were Americans."

-Sarah Pryor, Petersburg Citizen

Background

The siege of Petersburg affected many people who lived in the city, including those who helped with the war effort or fought in the miles of trenches. From a child leaving her home that soon became a battleground, to a doctor who cared for the wounded in a tobacco warehouse, civilians experienced life in a city under siege. Fortunately, many of these individuals recorded their stories, allowing us to learn more about their experiences today. From a slave who dug defenses around the city to a Union soldier's experience of fighting with African American troops, soldiers also shared their stories of war and why they were fighting. Their words are more than a mere description of war in a southern city. They capture the commitment, fear, hope, and sacrifice of many who were touched by the Civil War.

Focus Grade Level: 3rd – 6th / **Time:** 60 minutes

Program Description

Let us bring the Civil War to your classroom! Students learn about civilian and soldier perspectives of the American Civil War through an interactive program where they examine artifacts, letters, and diary entries of those who were involved in the war when it came to Petersburg's door. A park ranger will visit your classroom with trunks of clothing, reproduction artifacts and sealed letters for students to wear, examine, and read as they learn about the war from the perspective of a farmer, plantation owner, slave, doctor, civilian lady, child, and a soldier. This program provides students a "hands-on" opportunity to investigate artifacts, to identify who they represented, and role-play those individuals.

Program Location: Your classroom, located within a 50-mile radius of Petersburg

Standards of Learning Objectives

VS.1, USI.1, USI.9



RESERVATIONS AND FEE INFORMATION

Petersburg National Battlefield offers a variety of Ranger Guided Education Programs. The programs, listed on the previous pages of this guide, will help your students gain a greater understanding of the cultural and natural resources of the park. All reservations must be made a minimum of 3 weeks prior to your visit. In order to make reservations, please follow the steps listed below.

Ranger Guided Education Programs

1. Select a program that most closely matches your curricular needs or course of study.
2. Prepare a list of at least 3 possible dates (weekdays only). We request that you call the park at (804) 732-6094 ext.204 to confirm that the dates are available.
3. Fill out the reservation sheet on the facing page.
4. Photocopy the completed reservation sheet and mail or fax it to the park at (804) 732-0835.
5. Your reservation will be recorded and a confirmation will be returned to you. If programs are already booked, we will call you.

Fee Information

Most educational institutions are admitted free of charge when visiting the park for educational purposes. A written request for fee waivers must be filed with the park two weeks prior to your visit. This written request must include:

Documentation of groups' educational status.

Statement of purpose for visiting the park. This must relate to the park's resources.

Name of school or group, contact person, phone number, date, time of arrival, and number of students and adults.

Fee Waiver requests should be faxed to (804) 732-0835 or mailed to:

Attention: Fee Coordinator
Petersburg National Battlefield
1539 Hickory Hill Road
Petersburg, VA 23803-4721



RESERVATION SHEET

Teacher _____ School _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

School Phone (____) _____ Other Phone (____) _____

Grade: _____ Number of Students: _____ Number of Adults: _____

Any Special Needs Students? Yes No Explain

Date of Trip: 1st Choice _____

2nd Choice _____

3rd Choice _____

Time of Arrival at the Park: _____

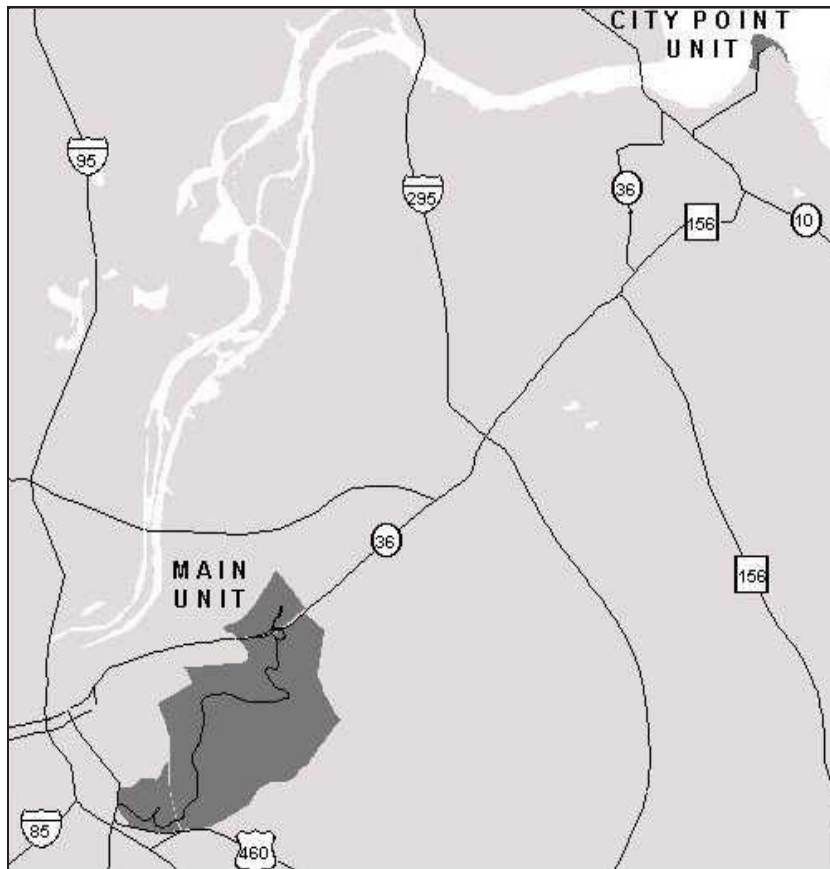
Program Name (list program choice or self-guided tour):

Please list other questions or concerns below:

Please photocopy and mail or fax
your completed Reservation Sheet to:
**Petersburg National Battlefield
Education Reservations
1539 Hickory Hill Road
Petersburg, VA 23803-4721
Fax # (804) 732-0835**



MAPS AND DIRECTIONS



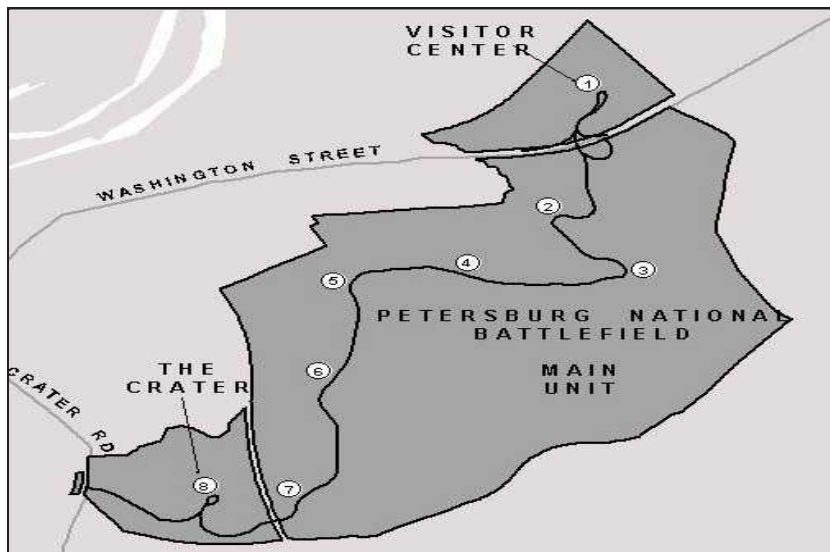
Directions to the Eastern Front unit of Petersburg National Battlefield in Petersburg.

From the north or south:

Take I-95, Wythe Street Exit in Petersburg. Follow Wythe Street, which turns into Route 36 East. The Battlefield entrance is on the right, approximately 2 1/2 miles from the exit.

From the west: Take Route 460 East to I-85 north. Follow I-85 to I-95 to the Wythe Street Exit. Follow Wythe Street as listed above.

From the east: Follow Route 460 West to the Wythe Street Exit. Follow Wythe Street as listed above.



Directions to City Point unit:

From the north or south:

Take I-95, Exit 61, east to Hopewell. Follow Route 10 east approximately ten miles to Appomattox Street. Turn left onto Appomattox Street, and follow it until it ends. Turn left onto Cedar Lane. The parking lot is on the left.

From I-295: Take Exit 10, east to Hopewell. Follow Route 10 approximately seven miles to Appomattox Street. Follow directions above.

View of Petersburg National Battlefield Eastern Front unit, illustrating the eight tour stops of the four-mile self-guided driving tour.



PROGRAM EVALUATION

To help us evaluate our educational programs, we would appreciate your thoughts and comments. Please photocopy this evaluation sheet or detach it from the booklet. Add any additional comments on back.

Name of School or Teacher: _____
(optional)

Group Size / Grade Level: _____

Name of program: _____

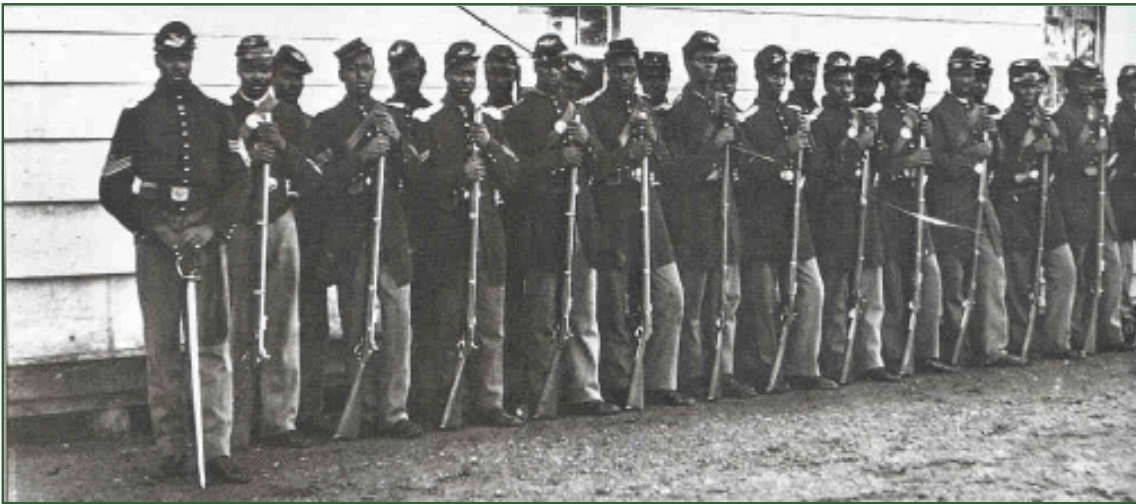
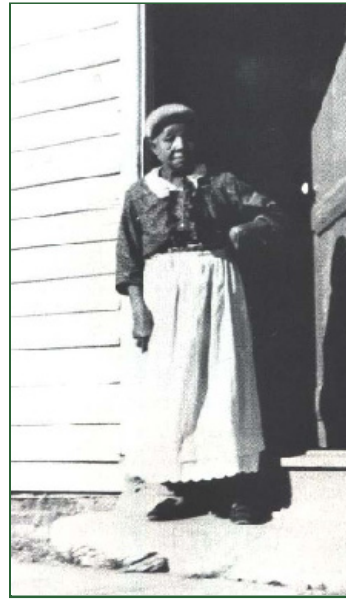
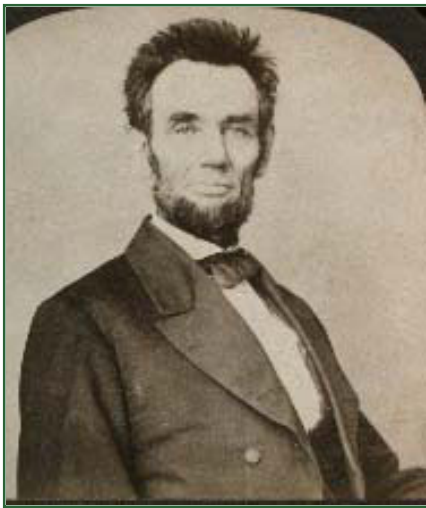
1. Did the program meet your expectations? Yes / No
2. Was the program suited to the group's size? Yes / No
3. Did the program support the specified Virginia SOLs? Yes / No
4. Was the length of the program adequate? Yes / No
5. What my students enjoyed most was _____

6. Ways I think the program can be improved: _____

7. Were Instructions for your visit clear? Yes / No
8. Was the reservation system convenient for you? Yes / No
9. Have you attended programs at Petersburg NB before? Yes / No
10. Will you plan to come back for a visit again? Yes / No

Thank you for your time. Please return this questionnaire to : Petersburg National Battlefield
Education Specialist
1539 Hickory Hill Road
Petersburg, VA 23803-4721





THE CIVIL WAR

WHY THE WAR CAME

Numerous attempts made by the United States Congress could not turn the tide of the growing controversy between the northern and southern regions of this new nation. A predominately industrial north attracted immigrants from European nations who settled in America to make a new life for themselves, while the majority of Southerners made their living on farms in a region dominated by agricultural pursuits. Slavery in the states and territories was a major issue in the growing disputes between the North and the South.

ORGANIZATION OF OREGON TERRITORY / August 1848

President Polk signed a bill organizing the Oregon Territory without slavery. Southerners agreed, with the understanding that other new territories would be opened to slaveholders.

COMPROMISE OF 1850 / September 1850

Congress adopted the Compromise of 1850:

- *California was admitted as the thirty-first state, a free state.
- *The territories of New Mexico and Utah were organized without restrictions on slavery.
- *The boundaries of Texas were set, also without restrictions on slavery.

KANSAS-NEBRASKA ACT - May 1854

The passing of this act overturned the Missouri Compromise, thereby opening the territory north of the old Missouri line to slavery. Both sides of the issue began to send settlers into the Kansas-Nebraska Territory to influence the future of these territories.

JOHN BROWN'S RAID - October 1859

At Harper's Ferry, radical abolitionist John Brown led a plot to seize a federal arsenal and armory in order to set up a state for freed blacks. Within twenty-four hours his band was captured and Brown was hanged on December 2nd.

PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION - November 6, 1860

Abraham Lincoln was elected president.

SOUTH CAROLINA SECEDES - December 20, 1860

Following South Carolina, the remaining ten states seceded within six months.

THE WAR BEGINS - April 12, 1861

At 4:30am, the first shots were fired at Fort Sumter beginning the bloodiest war in American history.

ON TO RICHMOND!

This was the rallying cry of many northern soldiers in the East who saw Richmond, the Confederate capital, as the logical target for the Union army. Following a Confederate victory at Manassas, Virginia on July 21, 1861, many realized that the war might not be over as quickly as they had anticipated. They were indeed right: for the next four years a succession of Northern commanders struggled to get to Richmond. Because the Northern capital was located in Washington D.C., four years of war were fought in a relatively small strip of Virginia countryside between Washington and Richmond. Almost ten months of that time was spent around Petersburg, Virginia, as the back door to Richmond.



PRELUDE TO PETERSBURG

THE OVERLAND CAMPAIGN

“Wherever Lee goes, there you will also go.”

--Ulysses S. Grant

Though the army shifted its focus in the Overland Campaign, the Union objective of taking Richmond still remained as the war neared its end. Grant’s words to General Meade in early April 1864 marked the beginning of this campaign. In the Overland Campaign, the primary objective of the Union army was to defeat the Confederate armies in the field, particularly the Army of Northern Virginia commanded by Robert E. Lee. On May 4, 1864, about 120,000 men in the Army of the Potomac crossed the Rapidan River and started the Overland Campaign.

From the Wilderness to Cold Harbor, soldiers like Private Warren Goss, 2nd Massachusetts Artillery, witnessed the devastation of the battles that took place across the Virginia countryside. Goss described the Battle of the Wilderness as a “. . . *blind and bloody hunt to the death, in bewildering thickets, rather than a battle.* . . .” After two days of close combat in the Wilderness, the battle was at a standstill, with heavy losses on both sides.

Acting on a hunch that Grant would next try to get between his Confederate forces and Richmond, Lee pulled his troops out of the Wilderness and concentrated them near Spotsylvania Court House, a strategic crossroad. After more than two weeks of constant fighting at Spotsylvania Court House, Grant pulled his Army of the Potomac out of its trenches and ordered it to march southeast. Lee took a parallel course, which allowed him to always stay between Grant’s army and Richmond. Their paths finally converged at Cold Harbor on June 1st.

THE BATTLE OF COLD HARBOR

“By the time we reached Cold Harbor we had begun to understand what our new adversary meant, and therefore, for the first time, I think, the men in the ranks of the Army of Northern Virginia realized that the era of experimental campaigns against us was over; that Grant was not going to retreat; that he was not to be removed from command because he had failed to break Lee’s resistance; and that the policy of pounding had begun, and would continue until our strength be utterly worn away. . .

--Sergeant George Cary Eggleston of Virginia, June 1, 1864

In the next two days, Grant lost another 5,000 men. On June 3, the third day at Cold Harbor, the Union troops massed for a great push that opened at 4:30 A.M. During this assault on strong Confederate trenches, the Union suffered thousands of casualties in one hour of fighting. By noon the attack was called off, and Lee’s army still stood between Grant’s army and Richmond.

Grant decided on a new strategy. On June 12th, he packed up his men and moved them south to Petersburg, twenty miles below Richmond, the hub which connected Richmond to the rest of the eastern Confederacy.



ON TO PETERSBURG

THE INITIAL ASSAULT ON PETERSBURG

Literally overnight, the Union army pulled many of its ranks out of the Richmond area and traveled south. After a series of hard marches, the army began to cross the James River on June 14th, some troops crossing via a 2,100 foot pontoon bridge.



Two Corps of men from the Army of the James and the Army of the Potomac received orders to travel down to Petersburg and attack. William Baldy Smith led the attack on Petersburg for two hours, until General Hancock arrived. Despite capturing one mile of the ten miles of Confederate fortifications that surrounded Petersburg, the Union army stopped their attack and waited until the following morning to try to capture Petersburg.



Throughout the night, Robert E. Lee dispatched Confederate troops down to Petersburg to assist General P.G.T. Beauregard in defending Petersburg. With these reinforcements and the tightening of the Confederate lines, the Union army was unable to capture the city over the next three days. Grant had not taken Petersburg and now faced a military siege.



BEHIND THE LINES

GRANT'S HEADQUARTERS AT CITY POINT



During the siege of Petersburg, General Grant's headquarters was located at City Point, Virginia, eight miles behind Union lines. A small port town at the confluence of the James and Appomattox Rivers, City Point had been connected to Petersburg by railroad prior to the war. Its strategic position next to the railroad bed, and the rivers offered Grant easy access to points along the front, as well as good transportation and communications with Fort Monroe, Virginia, and Washington, D.C. When he arrived at City Point on June 15, 1864, Grant established his headquarters in a tent on the east lawn of Dr. Richard Eppes' home known as Appomattox Plantation. As the winter approached and the weather grew colder, Grant's men built cabins for shelter during the winter months.

More important than being the headquarters for the United States armies, City Point was the supply base for the Union forces fighting at Petersburg. Overnight, the tiny village became one of the busiest ports in the world as hundreds of ships arrived off its shores bringing food, clothing, ammunition, and other supplies for the Union Army. For example, on an average day during the siege the Union Army had stored in and around City Point 9,000,000 meals of food and 12,000 tons of hay and oats. The only food not imported from the North was bread, which the Army produced on site. In a bakery built on the grounds, commissary personnel produced 100,000 rations of bread a day for the hungry soldiers fighting in the trenches of Petersburg.



Bread and other supplies were sent to the front by train and by wagon. The U.S. Military Railroad Construction Corps rebuilt the line west to Petersburg, then extended it southwest behind Union lines. Twenty-five locomotives and 275 railroad cars were then brought to City Point by barge from Washington, D.C. to provide rolling stock for the line. In just twenty-two days, the Army had completed the first stage of the railroad and had trains operating on a full schedule. At Petersburg, victory rode the rails.



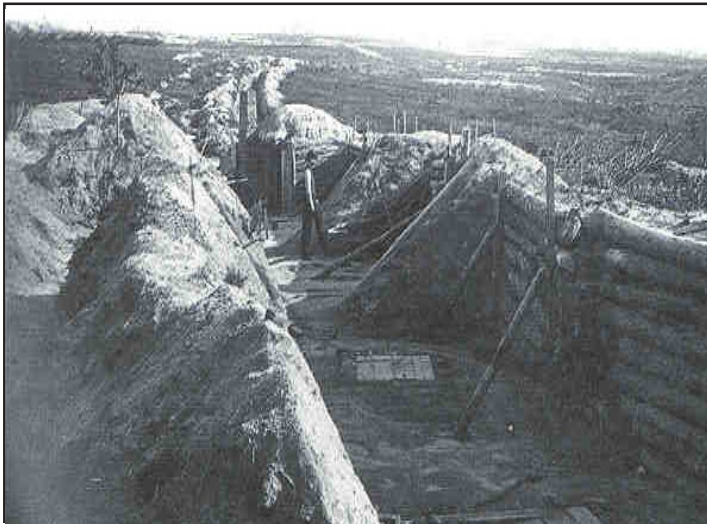
ALONG THE FRONT

THE EASTERN FRONT

"We must destroy this Army of Grant's before he gets to the James River. If he gets there it will become a siege and then it will be a mere question of time."

--General Robert E. Lee June, 1864

Four days of fighting had cost the Union Army more than 10,000 casualties and the Confederate Army about 4,000. It seemed that Lee's prophecy had come to pass and the Confederate Army was forced to stand and defend Petersburg. While the Union Army had not succeeded in their objective to

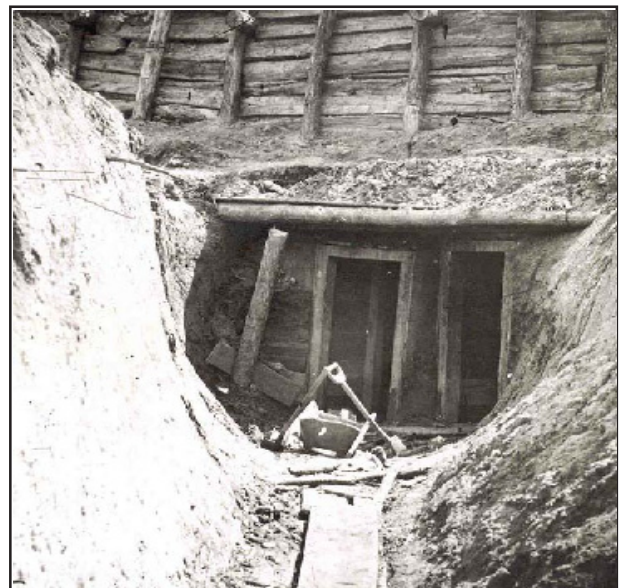


capture Petersburg, they now had control of two of the four railroads supplying Petersburg. Grant pressed his soldiers to push west in an effort to capture the Weldon and the South Side Railroads.

Meanwhile, soldiers along the Eastern Front dug in to protect their lines and witnessed trench warfare at very close range. In some areas along the front, forward trench lines of the enemy armies sat a few hundred yards apart. Laying low to the ground in an attempt to protect themselves against the constant exchange of rifle fire, soldiers survived daily guard duty in the trenches. The opposing trenches were

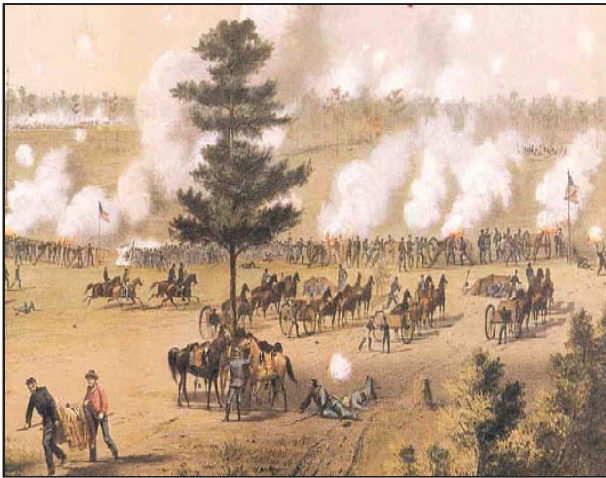
especially close along a section of the lines where the Confederate redan known as Elliot's Salient (a projection in a trench line) was constructed. At Elliot's Salient Confederate lines were just 400 feet from the Union earthworks.

In an attempt to break the stalemate, Union soldiers belonging to a Pennsylvania regiment began a mining operation to tunnel underneath the Confederate lines on June 25th, 1864. By July 17th, the tunnel had reached a point directly under Elliot's salient, a distance of about 511 feet. The explosion at this site created a tremendous hole where the salient was once located. During the battle, known today as the Battle of the Crater, some Union soldiers charged up the hill and went directly inside the hole only to find themselves trapped. Union soldiers had anticipated a direct assault on Petersburg, but instead the Crater became the scene of bitter hand-to-hand fighting, resulting in a defeat for the Union Army. Soldiers around the city continued to push west in an effort to capture the Confederate supply lines.



THE SIEGE

THE WESTERN FRONT



As Union soldiers tried to outflank Confederate soldiers in an effort to capture the remaining railroads around Petersburg, the trench lines in the area west of Petersburg stretched further apart. On August 18th, Major General Warren and his Corps moved out from their entrenched lines south of Petersburg to capture the Weldon Railroad. Despite Confederate counterattacks, Warren and his men captured portions of the railroad and extended the Union trench line. With the Weldon Railroad cut off to the Confederate forces near Petersburg, Grant ordered Warren and his men to push further west in an effort to capture the South Side Railroad. Though a breakthrough to the South Side Railroad eluded

Union forces, battles and skirmishes throughout the fall and winter of 1864 enabled Union soldiers to inch closer and closer to this important Confederate supply route. As the chill of winter came to Petersburg, Union and Confederate soldiers alike settled into their trenches and waited through the cold winter months of 1864. At the first thaw, Union soldiers renewed their assault to capture the South Side Railroad.

FIVE FORKS

“Hold Five Forks at all hazards.”

--Lee's orders to General Pickett

On April 1, 1865, the opportunity for the Union army to capture the South Side Railroad would finally come. After nine-and-a-half months of fighting around Petersburg, the Confederate army was stretched to its breaking point in an effort to defend their last remaining supply line. Both Lee and Grant knew that if the Union army cut the South Side Railroad, then the fighting at Petersburg would end. In what became the largest cavalry/infantry battle of the siege of Petersburg, Sheridan attacked the Confederate forces under General George Pickett at a country crossroads known as Five Forks. With no one in control, Confederate troops were caught off guard, allowing Sheridan's men a decisive victory in which nearly a third of Pickett's men were killed, captured, or wounded. Sheridan's charge broke the Confederate lines, and the Union army finally succeeded in opening the way to the South Side Railroad.



Finally, the Union army had within their grasp the capture of the last Confederate supply line. While Grant ordered an all out assault on Petersburg for April 2nd, Lee was faced with the challenge of getting his army safely out of the area.



THE END OF THE WAR

LEE'S RETREAT

The story of Petersburg will never be written; volumes would be required to contain it, and even those who went through the trying ordeal, can not recall a satisfactory outline of the weird and graphic occurrences of that stormy period."

--from the book North Carolina Troops 1861-65

Lee's only hope of preventing the capture of Petersburg and the destruction of his army lay in holding a defensive line at two posts, Fort Gregg and Fort Whitworth, held by a few hundred men. On April 2nd, Union soldiers swarmed all around Fort Gregg and threatened to cut off Lee's retreat. Though the Confederates suffered tremendous losses, they were able to hold off Union soldiers until Lee and his army could bring in reinforcements to allow for the safe evacuation of the city. Shortly after 1:00 a.m. on April 3, the first reports came that the enemy was abandoning town; one of the longest military sieges of a city in United States history had finally come to an end.

Meade, Grant, and Lincoln all visited Petersburg on April 3. At midday Meade and Grant rode west to organize the pursuit of Lee's retreating army. One week following the Union capture of Petersburg and Richmond, General Grant's army finally met Lee's men at Appomattox Court House. On April 9, 1865, Robert E. Lee surrendered to Ulysses S. Grant at Appomattox Court House. Not long after this, the Civil War finally ended.

POPLAR GROVE NATIONAL CEMETERY

*Here sleeps a youthful hero,
With the honor of a soldier brave,
Who gave up home, and friends, and life itself,
Our country still to save."*

During the siege, Union soldiers who were killed in battle were hastily buried near the battlefields, some in single shallow pits, others in mass graves. Identification was as simple as a name carved on a wooden headboard, if there was time to leave even that. Most of these soldiers were not given a proper burial, save what their comrades could provide by saying a few words over them.



In 1866, Lt. Colonel James M. Moore began to survey the Petersburg area for a place to locate a permanent national cemetery. Poplar Grove National Cemetery was established about four miles south of the city of Petersburg, where New York Engineers had camped and built a Gothic-style pine log edifice named Poplar Grove Church. With a cemetery location established, a "burial corps" began a search of the scattered graves to reinter soldiers in a proper cemetery. The remains of 6,178 men were placed in the Cemetery, with only 2,139 of these being positively identified.

Most Confederate soldiers who died during the siege are buried in mass graves by state, in the city's **Blandford Cemetery**, located a half mile from the battlefield on Crater Road.



IN THEIR OWN WORDS

Thousands of soldiers fought in the trench lines around Petersburg during the nine-and-a-half month siege. Farmers, storekeepers, and teachers, from the North and the South enlisted to fight for a variety of reasons from patriotism to a search for adventure. Through their letters and diary entries, we are fortunate to learn about their experiences during the war. What made them enlist? How did they fight in the trenches of Petersburg? Did they make it home to their loved ones after the nearly ten month siege?

Meet ten soldiers who fought for their respective causes during the American Civil War. In their own words, they will tell you (in three entries) of their experiences enlisting in the army, fighting on the front lines of Petersburg, and returning home if they survived. Background information is also provided for each soldier. Below, you will find a suggested activity for using these letters. However you choose to use them, the words of these soldiers provide a personal connection for students.

Letter #1: Why did I fight?

Students can read this letter in class as a pre-visit activity for their field trip to the battlefield to identify:

- The soldier's hometown, family life, career
- When and (possibly why) the soldier enlisted
- First days as a soldier

Letter #2: What happened at Petersburg?

Students can read this letter while on a field trip to the battlefield to identify:

- Soldier's experience at Petersburg
- Descriptions of landscape around Petersburg
- Descriptions of fighting

Letter #3: Did I survive the war?

Students can read this letter as a post-visit to their field trip to the battlefield to identify:

- What the soldier's final war days were like
- Whether the soldier lived or died
- A soldier's life after the war



FACES OF WAR



Chaplain Louis N. Beaudry



Colonel William J. Bolton



Sergeant Daniel Crotty



1st Lt Charles E. Denoon



Sergeant Major Marion H. Fitzpatrick



Private John Haley



Lt J. J. Scroggs



Private John Walters

No Picture Available: Captain Charles Oren Private Hermon Clarke

Chaplain Louis N. Beaudry

Who am I?

I was born Louis Napoleon Boudrye on August 11, 1833, in the town of Highgate, Vermont. Though I lived in Canada as a child, I was mainly raised in the United States. At 15 years old, I could not read nor write very well, so I worked on farms until I was able to educate myself. I later became a Methodist minister, after initially working as a schoolteacher. I received my commission as Chaplain of the 5th Regiment, New York Cavalry, on January 31, 1863.

I placed a letter in the local paper to my pupils:

“A Patriotic Teacher – Dear Patrons and Pupils: in leaving you, at least for a season, at the call of our beloved country, I have the pleasure of informing you that Mrs. B.W. Abrams, has kindly consented to supply my lack of service, by teaching all of my pupils, who may desire to study with her.”

Why did I fight?

April 20th, 1861 – “Away to the war! This has been and is the cry and experience of thousands from the loyal Northern States, for the past few months. It is also mine. I am going to do what I can for the interests of my bleeding country. I go, leaving a lucrative business, leaving the scenes and association of years; yea, leaving those whom on earth I love most dear – a beloved wife and dear little daughter Minnie Luella. This morning at ten was the parting scene. I was sad enough.”

What happened at Petersburg?

June 22nd, 1864 – “We left at early light. Started towards Petersburg, till we crossed the Norfolk RR. Turned to the left and struck across by a bypath to the plank road, where we gobbled up some Reb pickets. Moved down the plank and struck across again to the Petersburg & Weldon RR at Reams Station. Burned the depot and destroyed some track. . . All public buildings connected with the Rail Roads were burned; fires were built on the tracks, sufficient to destroy it in many places.”

Did I survive the war?

June 18th, 1865 – “This morning, we packed up. Heard our last General Call about 6 A.M. About 12 noon, there was roll call and dress parade, preparatory to leaving . . . I spent about 3 hours of the time trying to manage papers and things to take one or two horses, but failed. . . At 3 P.M., we were aboard the cars, the boys rejoicing greatly at the prospect before them.”

What happened to me after the war?

I returned home to my family near Albany, New York and resumed my following as a traveling minister along with lectures, teaching, and writing. My wife and I had four more children following the war, for a total of three boys and three girls. I filed for a disability pension for the malaria that I contracted in service and in 1888 was awarded the sum of \$10 per month.

War Journal of Louis N. Beaudry, Fifth New York Cavalry
Louis N. Beaudry
Edited by Richard E. Beaudry
Copyright 1996, McFarland & Company, Inc., Publishers



Colonel William J. Bolton

Who am I?

I was born in Norristown, Pennsylvania, on October 22, 1833, where I took an early interest in military matters, often drilling with neighborhood pals. I enlisted in the Wayne Artillerists, one of Norristown's militia companies in 1855. After graduating from Tremont Seminary in 1851, I worked as an engineer at a local furnace. However, I was penniless when the rebellion opened in April 1861. My company offered their services when the conflict began. I rose to the rank of Colonel of the 51st Pennsylvania Volunteer Infantry until the regiment was mustered out of service in 1865.

Why did I fight?

April 20th, 1861 – “I consequently left my home on that Saturday morning without one cent of money in my pocket, or a change of clothes to my back. All I took with me was my honor, my sword and the many kind wishes of dear friends. . . During the day the regiment was mustered into State service, and later on into the United States service as a Volunteer regiment. We were all engaged in drilling our companies all day.”

What happened at Petersburg?

July 30th, 1864 – “The regiment moved to the front to take position at 2 A.M., and a little later our whole four divisions were massed in front of the rebel redoubt. . . . After some waiting the fort was exploded at 4.42 A.M. . . The charge was not successful, but we held the crater. At 1 P.M. the bottom, sides, and nearly all parts of the crater were strewn with dead, dying and wounded soldiers. . . It was impossible to get water without great loss of life. . . . I was wounded soon after the explosion, having received a ball in the same place in my face as I did at Antietam. I was carried off the field...”

Did I survive the war?

July 26th, 1865: Letter to his men – “In a very few days this organization will cease to exist. Our mission has been fulfilled, the armed hosts of the enemy no longer defy us, our long fatiguing marches and hard fighting and weary watching for the enemy, day and night, are things of the past. You have, by your patriotic devotion, assisted in establishing a country, one, grand glorious, and indeed free. For nearly four years I have been associated with you, and for over one year of the time I have had the honor to be your commander. . . a thousand thanks are due to both officers and men for your prompt obedience to all my doers, and my love is increased by the remembrance of your bravery and gallantry as you have often displayed on many a bloody field.”

What happened to me after the war?

Following the war, my brother John and I ran a wallpaper business until we sold it in 1882. I later served as a customs house inspector, a watchman, and a U.S. Storekeeper. I married Emma Rupert in February 1868, and we had six children.

The Civil War Journal of Colonel Bolton, 51st Pennsylvania, April 20, 1861 – August 2, 1865

Edited by Richard A. Sauers

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Private Hermon Clarke

Who am I?

I was raised on a farm in Oneida County, New York. My mother passed away when I was only four years old, and my father later remarried. When I was six or seven years old, my father enrolled me in school for the first time. I was a good student, attending a small rural school and later Waterville Academy. I worked on my father's farm for a while before I began my job as a Storekeeper in a local farm store. After Lincoln's call in July 1862 for 300,000 volunteers to the Union cause, recruitment began in Oneida County. I volunteered at this time at the age of twenty-four with the 117th New York Volunteer Infantry.

Why did I fight?

August 17, 1862 - First letter home – "We have received marching orders and shall leave here Friday. . . It is believed that we shall go to Washington direct, but I hope not. I had rather stop where it is cooler a while. Our camp life is pretty tough. We sleep three or four in a bunk 5 feet wide and 6 feet long. There are 24 bunks in our building and all full. . . And our convenience for writing are not the best. I am sitting in our bunk and writing on one end of a board 2 feet long, one end on my knee."

What happened at Petersburg?

September 11, 1864 – "There is nothing new going on here. Every day or two there is quite a severe artillery fight. . . We are doing very hard duty at present. We are in the pits half the time, 3 days in and 3 days out. One third of the men are on fatigue every night and the rest while in the pits have to be under arms all night. The weather is getting quite cool here – almost too cool nights for comfort or health. A great many are coming down with the ague [sickness]."

Did I survive the war?

March 14, 1865 - Wilmington, NC – "The weather is very warm and fine. It will be a grand march to Fayetteville if we go there. It is over 100 miles, and the march of a triumphant army is glorious, I tell you. Yesterday I spent the day in the city and at night attended the theater. Had a gay time altogether. . .

Everything will go well if they don't put us into a fight. Our Brigade has done fighting. We have done our share, and if we are put in again there will be the biggest run ever known in the U.S. Army."

What happened to me after the war?

I arrived home as a hero. My fellow soldiers and I knew that we were wanted back in Oneida by the grand gesture of appreciation given to us at the railway station. As I settled back home, I began work once again as a Storekeeper at W.J. Bissell's store. Later, I went into the coal business with two partners. I married Alice Cleveland on August 13, 1868. After marriage, I worked many jobs, before finally settling into my life career of keeping the books for a local hop dealer. I did not miss a day of work for twenty-six years.

Back Home in Oneida, Hermon Clarke and His Letters
Harry F. Jackson and Thomas O'Donnell
Copyright 1965, Syracuse University Press



Sergeant Daniel G. Crotty

Who am I?

At the beginning of the Civil War, I was working as a shoemaker. Soon after the firing on Fort Sumter, I volunteered with Company F, Third Michigan Infantry serving in the Army of the Potomac. I was soon promoted to the rank of Corporal and assigned a place of honor in the color guard (those responsible for keeping the flag aloft). I served in over thirty battles and skirmishes and never received a wound.

Why did I fight?

“The year 1861 will be remembered as one of the most extraordinary in the history of the United States. . . The telegraph flashed the sad news to every city, town, hamlet in the land, that the Stars and Stripes had been insulted and trailed in the dust, and that, too, by men who called themselves Americans. . . On the 12th of June, 1861, we filed out of our camp, to commence our trip to the front, some never to return to the weeping loved ones left behind. . . No pen can describe it.”

What happened at Petersburg?

“The siege goes bravely on. The two armies keep digging away under each other’s guns. The hardships to be endured are very great, but all now have schooled themselves down so that they are met as a matter of course. We do not pretend to say how long we will have a rest, nor do we care much, for we are so used to hardships that almost everything is done without a murmur.”

Did I survive the war?

“Lee and his army at last had surrendered. The artillery belch forth shot after shot, but this time they are shots of peace, and the whole army is one vast body of cheering and wild excitement. Some laugh, some cry, caps are sent into the air and every man cheers until he is hoarse. . . we lie down to rest, well satisfied with our work of the last short week, - breaking through their strongholds at Petersburg and Richmond and capturing the whole Rebel army after a chase of about seventy-five miles - we take the needed sleep, well satisfied that our work is done, and done well.”

What happened to me after the war?

I returned home to Michigan after the surrender. Eight weeks later, I married Ann McMahon and together we had nine children. I worked in later years with veteran’s affairs and published my war-time memories in 1874.

Four Years Campaigning in the Army of the Potomac

Color Sergeant Daniel G. Crotty, Third Michigan Volunteer Infantry

Copyright 1874, Dygert Bros. & Co. Printers and Binder, Grand Rapids, Michigan



1st Lt. Charles E. Denoon

Who am I?

I was born in 1840 on the family farm in Powhatan County, Virginia. I was born into a large family of two brothers and four sisters where we worked on the farm. With the help of a few slaves, our home and its furnishings were hardly better than average. My family was too poor to hire a tutor, but I still received a good education. On the eve of the Civil War, I was a young man with lots of friends who enjoyed hunting, fishing, and racing my horse. I enlisted to fight with the Confederacy in the 41st Virginia Regiment, serving as 1st Lieutenant and sometimes temporarily filling even higher ranks.

Why did I fight?

March 28th, 1862 - Camp Near Fair Grounds, Near Norfolk – “I now seat myself for the purpose of writing you a few lines to let you know how I am getting on. The first night I left home, the cars ran off the track and without doing any damage, though it detained us 6 or 7 hours. . . The boys were in good spirits until they got near Norfolk and saw the swamp and the marshes. Almost impassable. I suppose they thought of sickness and the chances of getting a through ticket if the Yankees should attack us. . . I stand a good chance to get some command.”

What happened at Petersburg?

June 25th, 1864 - Line of Battle, 2 miles south of Petersburg – “Since my last note to you was written, I have been marching and fighting almost incessantly. . . On Thursday, the 23rd, we took back the line of march, to the Petersburg and Weldon Railroad which had been cut by the Yankees. We marched some ten miles around the Yankee left flank, attacked their rear and drove them from the Railroad. . . The loss of our Brigade has been slight, considering the amount of fighting done. I think Petersburg is safe. . . The weather is dry and hot, and we have no shade on our line. You may imagine how we suffer.”

Did I survive the war?

August 2nd, 1864 - 41st Va. Inf., In trenches near Petersburg – “I write to announce to you a very sad and painful fact. An announcement that has been made frequently since the commencement of this War – but we should nerve ourselves and be prepared to hear the worst in such times. . . Lieut. Charles Denoon has fallen. His name is added to the long list of those Heroes who have given themselves as sacrifices to their country. He was struck and killed by a Minnie ball whilst gallantly leading his company in the charge against the enemy on Saturday, the 30th of July. His remains have been interred in Petersburg, where they can be easily gotten. . . Such are the calamities of war.”

What happened to me after the war?

Charlie died at the Battle of the Crater on Saturday morning, July 30, 1864. He was 23 years old.

Charlie's Letters: The Civil War Correspondence of Charles E. Denoon

Edited by Richard T. Couture

Copyright 1989, R.T. Couture, C.W. Historicals, Collingswood, NJ, 1989



Sergeant Major Marion H. Fitzpatrick

Who am I?

I was born in Macon County, Georgia, on March 15, 1835. I lived on a farm in Crawford County with my parents and two brothers. I attended Elim Baptist Church with a lovely girl named Amanda Olive White, whom I later married. I operated a small country store, farmed, and taught school in the community where we lived. I enlisted in the 45th Georgia Regiment in 1862.

Why did I fight?

May 11th, 1862 - Richmond – “We arrived safely here yesterday morning. I am well and getting on finely. I never enjoyed better health in my life. . . We are in Guinness Station, 12 miles South of Fredericksburg. This is a beautiful place. It is oak and hickory and is slightly rolling. The Yankees are thick as hops about here. Our force here is about 30,000. It is said that our regiment will be ordered back to Richmond soon. We were examined by a surgeon yesterday and mustered into service. The recruits will draw tents and equipment soon.”

What happened at Petersburg?

Nov. 3rd, 1864 - Petersburg – “For two days we have had no skirmishing on our line here. The Yanks agreed to quit if our boys were willing, and they readily consented . . . The most of them are busily engaged preparing for winter, which is fast approaching here. Instead of building huts as formerly, they dig a hole in the ground about 6 feet deep and 10 feet square and put over the top a layer of large logs. On that they put a layer of boughs and leaves and cover the whole with dirt which they pile on till it is shaped like a potato hill. They then fix a chimney and are not only very comfortable but protected from the enemy’s shells.”

Did I survive the war?

March 28th, 1865 - Line of battle 2 ½ miles south of Petersburg – “Many sad changes have taken place since you heard from me last. . . about the 16th of this month I was taken quite sick with chills and fever . . . I was sent to the hospital in Richmond. While I was gone the Regt. Got into a severe fight. . . In trying to reestablish our picket line, our Reg. got badly cut up . . . All is quiet now again, but it is sad and heart sickening to look at our Regt. now. It seems that Providence ordained that I should miss it, or else I might now have been captured or killed.”

What happened to me after the war?

Soon after the letter of March 28th was written, Grant broke through Lee’s lines and drove the Confederate forces back. During this final battle near Petersburg, Fitzpatrick was mortally wounded. He was hit by shrapnel when he rushed to the top of their breastworks to replace a Confederate flag which had been shut down. He and many of his comrades were piled on railroad cars and transported to Richmond, which would soon fall into Union hands. He lived his final few hours in the Capital of the Confederacy. Four days later Lee surrendered at Appomattox.

Letters to Amanda (1862 – 1865)

Sergeant Major Marion Hill Fitzpatrick

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Private John Haley

Who am I?

I grew up in a poor, hard-working family. I left grammar school early, so that I could help the family earn a living. I worked for a while as an alley boy in a textile mill. When the mill shut down, I went to work at the Saco Water Power Shop until the Civil War broke out. I readily admit that I enlisted more to save face with my friends than as an act of patriotism. I feared that I lacked those qualities a soldier needed; however, I joined up with a Maine regiment that was formed in August 1862. Still, I believed in the Union and determined to protect it at all costs.

Why did I fight?

“Company I, to which we are to belong, is composed almost entirely of men from York and Cumberland counties . . . Most of the men are scholars to a greater or lesser degree: sixteen graduates of high schools, nine collegians, two clergymen, and one lawyer. . . It may be inferred, and justly so, that patriotism prompted most of these men to enter the service. As far as my own case is concerned, I lay claim to but very little of what goes by that name. Love of a change, an overwhelming desire to see the country furnished the key to my conduct. But here I am, however I came.”

What happened at Petersburg?

September 12th, 1864 – “No safety today except in hugging the works vigorously. An incessant fire is kept up and it is deliberately inviting death for one of us to leave the works to go to our tents, just a few feet away. No one has been hit, but it has been thump! Thump! Thump! All day long. There must be tons of iron piled up outside the works.”

Did I survive the war?

April 2nd, 1865 – “When we did move forward, we expected a desperate resistance and great loss. . . Orders were received to move up the road and carry the works. Now for the bloody encounter. But a sudden change came over us, for as we gazed at the point where we were to attack, a sight met our eyes that nearly unmanned us. Where two minutes before the Stars and Bars had flown, now floated the glorious old Stars and Stripes. Never before have we thought it so beautiful, and a cheer went up that could have been heard in Petersburg. Our yells rose above the din of battle.”

What happened to me after the war?

I returned to civilian life on June 19, 1865, and to the Water Power Shop that I had left three years before – the same room, the same boss, the same job. Later, I secured a job as a night watchman at a local railroad. I married Abbie A. Batchelder, and we had two children, Adelaide and George. Eventually, I spent fourteen years as a bookkeeper with a Gas-Light Company. I was involved in movements to erect Civil War monuments and to record my Civil War experiences.

The Rebel Yell and the Yankee Hurrah (The Civil War Journal of a Maine Volunteer) / Edited by Ruth L. Silliker
Copyright 1985, Down East Books, Camden, Maine



Captain Charles Oren

Who am I?

I was born in Clinton County, Ohio, on Sept. 9, 1831 into a family of Quakers and abolitionists. My father worked as an Underground Railroad station keeper. I was educated at Antioch College in Ohio, and later became a teacher and principal at a local high school. I married Sarah "Sattie" Allen, and we had two children. I purchased a farm in Clinton County shortly before I enlisted in the army. It was my hope to repay debts for this farm from my military salary. I enlisted on August 13, 1863 and was appointed Captain, commanding Company E of the 5th United States Colored Troops.

Why did I fight?

Sept 13th 1863 - Sunday eve 8 oclock – "The time in which I was to write you at length has arrived. It has been a long week to me. . . Another week in camp – I am beginning to get a start. I have been on battalion drill every day. Last week I took command of my company and I do not see but I move it as well as those who have been in service for two years. The Colonel said he did not see how I caught the movements so soon, but you know when I have the will I can learn any thing soon. . . We had [a] meeting to day and it looked well to see seven hundred [black soldiers] in their uniforms all drawn up in line."

What happened at Petersburg?

Monday Morning July 4th, 1864 - Near Petersburg – "Another 4th of July finds me still alive to enjoy the anniversary of our independence. It is true my health has not been what I should desire, but still I have been able for duty most of the time. We are suffering with a very severe drought, having had no rain for 4 weeks and dust and heat is almost unbearable. We have had some of the hottest weather I have ever experienced. . . We are still laying in sight of Petersburg. The two lines are not more than 30 yards apart. Both are protected by formidable earth works. The skirmishers keep up a constant popping, which is best described by the firing of a bunch of fire crackers. . ."

Did I survive the war?

Telegraph from City Point, Va July 30, 1864 - "To Loft & Brown, Martinsville Ohio. Captain Oren is dead. Body Embalmed & will Be Sent Home.

-P. A. Stomats (U.S. Sanitary Commission)

Nove 24th 1864 - Camp at Deep Bottom, Va – "This is the first time that I ever have taken My Pen in Hand to write to You. I am a member of Capt. Orens Company the morning That He was shot. If my Brother Had of Bin shot it would Not of Hurt me any worse then It Did when He was shot. He Was a good officer not only That But He Had His men At Heart. I Dearly loved him. Any thing that I could Do for Him I would Do it. . . I am a sergt of His company and He love me as one and Would Have riten to You Before But I could not find out Your name. . ."

-Dillon Chavers (USCT, 5th Ohio Regt, who served under Oren)

Dearest Sattie: Civil War Letters of Capt. Charles Oren 5th U.S.C.T.

Self-published, Sunnyvale CA

Copyright 1992 by Timothy R. Oren



Lieutenant. J.J. Scroggs

Who am I?

I was born in November of 1834 in West Point, Ohio where I attended public school, went on to college, and joined a literary society. I later married Margaret O. Young and we had two children Eva and Ellmore. On the eve of the Civil War, I was working as a farmer in Ohio. I enlisted in 1862 to fight for the Union cause. While the Southern slaveholding states profess their cause for secession is the interference of the North with the institution of slavery, I think the real reason is because they were losing control of the government.

Why did I fight?

August 5th, 1862 – “I this day enlisted in the service of our new bellicocious Uncle Samuel, for three years or during the war. This war has assumed the most stupendous proportions. The filling of the two last requisitions, each 300,000, will place in the field an army of 1,200,000 loyal men, who are ready to die in defense of our country, and its righteous institutions.”

What happened at Petersburg?

Trenches near Petersburg Va, July 31st, 1864 – “I know that you will be very anxious to hear from me after the battle of yesterday so I write at the first opportunity. . . The suspense was fearful and some were already predicting the failure of the great mine when with the smothered roar of an earthquake and a power which shook the earth for miles around the mighty giant broke through the imprisoning walls lifting the rebel fort, guns and garrison high in the air. Hardly had the tremendous explosion taken place when it was succeeded by another and more terrible roar burst with an awful crash from the iron throats of one hundred pieces of artillery. For one hour without cessation or interval the iron storm raged over our heads...”

Did I survive the war?

April 19th, 1865 – “Richmond has fallen. Lee’s army is no more. . . Thus ends one of the most stupendous civil wars recorded in history. . . In two months or less the volunteer white troops will be mustered out of service but the Colored troops will hardly get out until their time of enlistment has expired. I don’t know how it will be about the officers . . . I would like to get home just as soon as possible. You can rest assured that I will not delay one hour longer than I can help.”

What happened to me after the war?

I served the Union cause bravely. When I returned home, I devoted myself to farming until the fall of 1871, when I was elected Auditor of Columbiana County. I was re-elected in 1873, working hard in this position. I was also an active member of the United Presbyterian Church.

J.J. Scroggs’ Diary and Letters 1852 – 1865
Compiled by Larry Leigh
Copyright 1996, Larry Leigh, Thomaston, GA



Private John Walters

Who am I?

I was born near Amsterdam, Holland on January 12, 1835. I came to America as a young man and lived in Albany, New York, where I worked in an office of the New York State legislature. Later, I moved to the seaport of Norfolk, Virginia, where I started a bookbinder trade with a business partner. When Virginia voted to leave the Union of states, I joined the Norfolk Light Artillery Blues.

Why did I fight?

May 8th, 1862 – “Nothing is farther from my mind than the keeping of a journal, yet as those times are as stirring as any which I expect to see no matter how long my life may be spared, I have thought that by dotting down an event here, or an incident there, I might in the future be reminded of the past. I shall by no means mark down the events of each day as they occur, but shall only select the most interesting taking Friday, the 8th of May, 1862 as a starting point for these notes. I have selected this day for the reason that upon it I bade farewell to many acquaintances and a few friends...”

What happened at Petersburg?

September 10th, 1864 – “About half past two o’clock this morning we were awakened by the rattle of musketry, and in a moment all were at their places. We soon learned that the enemy had advanced their picket line and in so doing, had captured a portion of the pickets. . . We soon reinforced our pickets and drove the enemy out of our lines, capturing fifty or sixty of them. All this time, the musketry fire was very lively. As soon as there was sufficient light to sight the guns by, the artillery took a hand in, and soon everything began to look a little more interesting than suited me, especially as there was a concentrated fire of six or eight guns on the one to which I belong.”

Did I survive the war?

April 9th, 1865 – “...The firing suddenly ceased and in the course of a couple of hours we learned that General Grant had demanded, and General Lee acceded to a surrender. . . about four o’clock Lee made a short speech to his troops, stating the necessity and motives which caused him to surrender. . . Tears ran down the cheeks of the old man and his was so broken with emotion that it was scarcely possible to hear his frequent “God bless you,” and as for the men, not a dry eye could be seen, while many sobbed aloud in uncontrollable anguish. How long this continued I cannot tell, as the moment I shook hands with him, I made my way out of the crowd almost blind of tears of which I dared not be ashamed...”

What happened to me after the war?

I returned home to find that I was forbidden to wear any trace of my old Rebel uniform under threat of arrest. We were strongly encouraged to take the “Ironclad Oath” which renounced the Confederacy as a promise to never again to take up arms against the United States government. I returned to my former trade, bookbinding, married Virginia Phillips in 1870, and had three children.

Norfolk Blues: The Civil War Diary of the Norfolk Light Artillery Blues
John Walters and Editor Ken Wiley
Copyright 1997, Burd Street Press, Shippensburg, PA



TRAVELING TRUNKS

Traveling Trunks—designed for grades 4-6

What would it be like to be a soldier in the Civil War? What would it be like to leave your family behind to fight for a cause? What would you take with you? How did African-Americans respond when the United States Army began recruiting them to fight? All of these questions and more will be answered when you check out our traveling trunks for use in your classroom.

The traveling trunks include curriculum-based lesson plans, videos, worksheets, maps, uniforms, accoutrements, and timelines. The trunks explore the military experience of three different soldiers during the American Civil War, including a Confederate, a Union, and a United States Colored Troop (USCT). Students gain a greater understanding of why individuals chose to leave their families and homes to fight in the Civil War. They will also explore how the soldiers lived and fought, and how they felt about their experiences. The trunks are designed for students in grades 4th - 6th.

Please contact the education specialist at Petersburg National Battlefield at (804) 732-6094 ext. 204 if you are interested in checking out a traveling trunk. Trunks are available to schools for a period of 2 weeks. They are available free of charge, though the school is responsible for picking them up or paying postage costs.



Union Trunk



Soldier

William Ray

Born:	1838
Married:	Unmarried
Children:	None
Occupation:	Blacksmith
Hometown:	Cassville, Wisconsin

William Ray was a blacksmith before enlisting and becoming a member of Company F, Seventh Wisconsin Volunteers. Ray joined the “Iron Brigade” in order to put down what he called the “Rebellion in this once Glorious Union.” As students learn about William Ray through his personal journal entries, they will:

- Describe how the Civil War was different from other previous wars in regards to media exposure to the public, including images from the battlefield, political cartoons, and propaganda posters.
- List two common reasons why individuals from the North chose to enlist.
- Explain how many northerners viewed the South following secession.
- Describe how infantry soldiers fought, what items were used for battle, and what life was like in the trenches at Petersburg.

Please contact the Education Specialist at (804) 732-6094 ext. 204 or send an email to Robin_Snyder@nps.gov for information on obtaining traveling trunks for your classroom. Teachers may check out the trunks for a two week period provided that they either pick up the trunks at the Eastern Front Visitor Center or pay for postage.

Confederate Trunk



Soldier

William Pegram

Born:	June 29, 1841
Married:	Single
Children:	None
Occupation:	Circuit Court Clerk / College Student
Hometown:	Richmond, VA

Lt. Colonel William Pegram was a CSA Artillery Battalion Commander. In the spring of 1861, Pegram left the University of Virginia, returning to Richmond to protect the southern way of life. He fought throughout the siege of Petersburg and was mortally wounded at the Battle of Five Forks. In following William Pegram's military experience students will:

- List two reasons why some southerner's chose to fight.
- Write an opinion statement about how Pegram felt about slavery and the north.
- Explore two reasons why southerners felt it was necessary to secede.
- Identify where much of the fighting in the Civil War took place, while following William's company.
- Explain why a large number of battles were fought in Virginia.
- Describe the role an artillerist played in battle and the equipment needed to operate a cannon during battle.

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United States Colored Troop Trunk

D | 39 | U.S.C.T.
Dorsey Decatur
Co. B, 39 Reg't U.S. Col'd Inf.

Appense on
Company Descriptive Book
of the organization named above.

DESCRIPTION.

Age *25* years; height *6* feet *—* inches.
Complexion *Griff.*
Eyes *Blk.*; hair *Blk.*
Where born *Howard Co. Md.*
Occupation *Laborer.*

ENLISTMENT.

Place *Dick. 22*, 186*4*.
Where *Balt.*
By whom *—*; term *—* yrs.
Remarks: *1st Sergt.*

E. Weston

Soldier

Decatur Dorsey

Born:	1839
Married:	Unknown
Children:	Unknown
Occupation:	Former Slave
Hometown:	Maryland

Decatur Dorsey, a former slave, served as a Sergeant in Company B of the 39th United States Colored Troops. On July 30, 1864 he earned the Congressional Medal of Honor for his actions at the Battle of the Crater. While exploring Dorsey's record of service students will have the opportunity to:

- Discover how some slaves were granted permission to enlist in the Union army and what slaves thought of the war.
- Explore reasons why Dorsey and other blacks chose to fight.
- View copies of Dorsey's original service record to learn about when and where he fought.
- Follow the actions of Dorsey and the 39th U.S.C.T. around Petersburg.
- Learn about their life on the front lines through their own words and descriptions.

Please contact the Education Specialist at (804) 732-6094 ext. 204 or send an email to Robin_Snyder@nps.gov for information on obtaining traveling trunks for your classroom. Teachers may check out the trunks for a two week period provided that they either pick up the trunks at the Eastern Front Visitor Center or pay for postage.



Student Activity: Who am I?

Read the quotes on the following pages that were written or spoken by individuals who experienced the Civil War in Petersburg as soldiers or civilians. Identify these individuals by their words. Match the quotes with the individual who may have said them. The boxes contain the names of people and their roles. You can find the answers on page 54 of this booklet.

"I was born January 9, 1849 on the James at a place called Epps Island, City Point. I was born a slave. How old am I! Well there's the date. Count it up for yourself. My owner's name was Dr. Richard B. Epps."

1. _____

**Jennie Friend
Stephenson
Child on the
homefront**

A

". . . The cannonading is incessant here, but very few are wounded by it. We have plenty of water forced up by the engine from James River. . . We have everything in the hospital a heart can wish for; had splendid light cake for breakfast. I am noted all over our Div. for making good biscuit. . . I have more patients in now and have considerable to attend to."

2. _____

**William Pegram
Artillerist
Army of Northern
Virginia**

B

"I am afraid that the evening is at hand, when we must bid adieu to the bright days - the balls, the merry hair-dresser, the round of visits. . .the charming 'at homes'. . ."

3. _____

**Richard Slaughter
Slave on Appomattox
Plantation**

C

"My confidence and love for my Father were unbounded and my affection and sympathy for the servants were great. Mammy was almost as dear to me as Mother. All the servants were safe in our hands . . . We never betrayed them and they knew it. But ... I hear mutterings and felt the charge of the coming storm."

4. _____

**Dr. John Claiborne
Head of hospitals in
Petersburg**

D



Student Activity: Who am I?

“On the one side we have a President opposed to us in every way. . . while on the other side, we have disunion, and the greatest of all evils, ‘a civil war’ staring us in the face. This is not a mere Jon Brown raid.”

5. _____

Louis N. Beaudry
Fifth New York
Cavalry

E

“Read laws of farm after giving out provisions today there having been several delinquents lately, among them Henry Corsen who left here Friday night for island without a pass and did not get back until this morning, reduced his allowance to a pound of meat & gave him warning. . .”

6. _____

Sarah Pryor
Civilian Lady in
Petersburg

F

“Away to war! This has been and is the cry and experience of thousands from the loyal Northern States for the past few months. It is also mine. I am going to do what I can for the interest of this bleeding country.”

7. _____

Cornelia Hancock
Nurse at Field Depot
Hospital at City Point

G

“... I have now the management of all the sick from this great army who are required to be sent to Genl. Hospital. How gladly would I lay down the responsibility tonight - but that would be unmanly. . . There are now one hundred ambulances waiting in line on the street for my orders and I have to send off on them a thousand sick and wounded. . . “

8. _____

Dr. Richard Eppes
Plantation Owner at
Appomattox
Plantation

H



The End

The siege of Petersburg represented one of the final chapters of the American Civil War. One week after the fighting ended at Petersburg, Lee surrendered to Grant at Appomattox Courthouse on April 9, 1865. Thousands of soldiers who fought for months in the trenches around Petersburg returned home to piece together the lives they had left behind when they answered the call to arms. While a torn nation began to heal, the men who had sacrificed their lives for their causes would not be forgotten.

June 9th, 1865

Here we are, some with whole skins, and
Some not so whole. Others have been left behind.
For myself, I can only wonder that there is a bone left
In my carcass when I think of the wholesale carnage through
Which I have passed. My bruises are inward.

It is all over now, and I can only regard it as a hideous dream — the
smoking ruins, the sodden fields, the trailing banner, the slaughtered
thousands and wailing families, the roar of the cannon, the Rebel
Yell and Yankee Hurrah have all passed away, and we again return to
peace.

--John Haley, 17th Maine Volunteers



Answers to the Student Activity: Who am I? on the previous pages.

1-C / 2-G / 3-F / 4-A / 5-B / 6-H / 7-E / 8-D

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